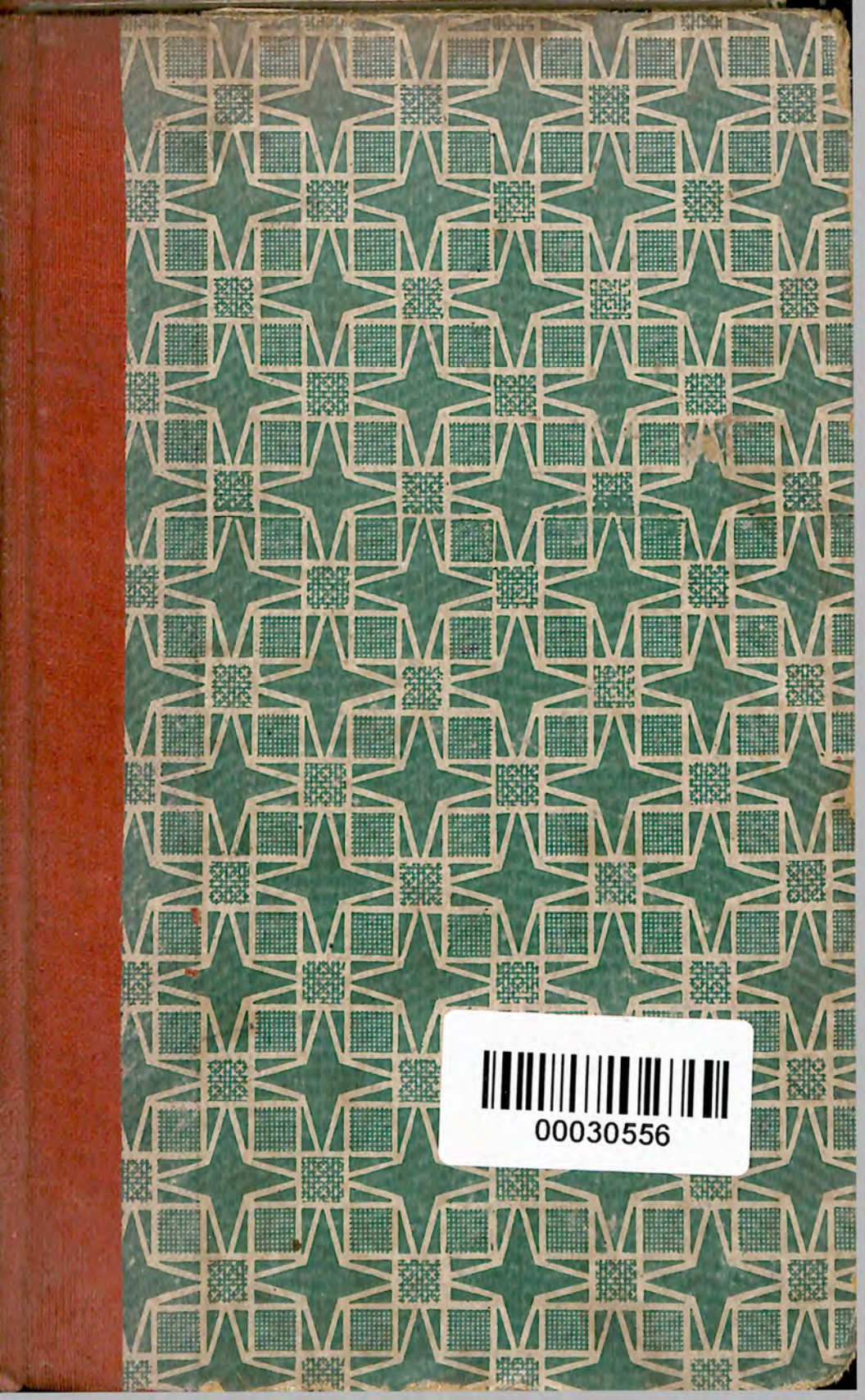

00030556

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY-1.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 10 February, 2016

HISTORY

OF THE

CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

OF

FRANCE UNDER NAPOLEON.

30556 ac

FORMING A SEQUEL TO

"THE HISTORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION."

Ss. d. 1.

BY

M. A. THIERS,

MEMBER OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY AND OF THE INSTITUTE,

&c., &c., &c.

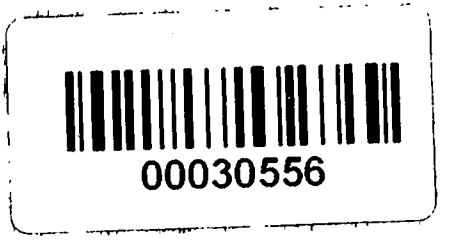
VOL. XVII.

LONDON:

WILLIS AND SOTHERAN, 136, STRAND.

1860.

9114-04
Thi/His
30556



CONTENTS.

BOOK LI.

PAGE

THE INVASION 3.

BOOK LII.

BRIENNE AND MONTMIRAIL . . . 113

BOOK LIII.

FIRST ABDICATION . . . . . 207.

CONCLUSION 444

BOOK LI.

THE INVASION.

isorga[illegible]n of the French army on reaching the Rhine—Distress of our troops in Italy [illegible] Spain—Operations of Prince Eugene in Friuli, during the autumn of 1813, and [illegible] retreat to the Adige—Operations of Marshal Soult in Navarre, and his fruitless efforts to save St. Sebastian and Pampeluna—Retreat of Soult towards the Nive and the Adour—Marshal Suchet falls back on Catalonia—Deplorable position of France, where every preparation had been made for conquest, but none for defence—Public discontent against Napoleon, because he had not concluded peace after the victories of Lutzen and Bautzen—The Allies not aware of this position of affairs—Alarmed at the bare idea of crossing the Rhine, they think of making fresh proposals of peace to Napoleon—The Emperor Francis and M. Metternich more disposed to negotiate than the others—Causes of their pacific disposition—M. de St. Aignau, French Minister at Weimar, being then at Frankfort, is despatched to Paris, to offer to Napoleon terms of peace, having for basis the natural frontiers of France—Instant departure of M. de St. Aignau for Paris—His reception—Fearing to weaken his position by too hastily accepting the Frankfort propositions, Napoleon agrees to the meeting of a Congress at Manheim, without expressing any opinion on the basis of the proposed peace—First care of Napoleon on returning to Paris—Discontent of the public against M. de Bassano, who is accused of having encouraged a war policy—He is replaced by M. de Caulaincourt—Some other minor changes in the administration—Levy of 600,000 men, and determination to add the additional centimes to all the contributions—Immediate Convocation of the Senate, to pass by simple resolution the proposal of the new levies and fresh taxes—Use Napoleon intends to make of the resources placed [illegible] his disposal—He hopes if the Allies allow him the winter to make his arrang[illegible] to be able to force them back beyond the Rhine—His measures for the co[illegible] of Holland and Italy—Secret negotiation with Ferdinand VII., and [illegible] restore his Liberty and Throne, on condition that he will put an end to [illegible] refuse the Spanish territory to the English—Treaty of Valençay—[illegible] Duke de San Carlos to induce the Spaniards to accept this tr[illegible] Murat—His dejection quickly succeeded by the desire to beco[illegible] His intrigues at Vienna and Paris—He asks Napoleon to giv[illegible] filled with indignation, is at first tempted to give vent to [illegible] effort remains silent—Whilst Napoleon is making his pre[illegible] discontented with the evasive answer made to the Fra[illegible] explicit reply—Napoleon determines at length [illegible] negotiate on the basis of the natural frontiers, and to open a Congress at Manheim—Unfortunately, durin[illegible]

aspect of affairs had totally changed in the councils of the Allies—A violent party, headed by the Prussians, were desirous that the war should be carried on with vigour, that Napoleon should be dethroned, and France forced back within the limits that marked her frontiers in 1790—This party totally disapproved the Frankfort propositions—Alexander flatters all parties in order to rule them ultimately—England would have supported Austria in her pacific views, if a recent event had not induced her to continue the war—In effect, on the approach of the Allied armies, Holland rose, and Belgium threatened to follow her example—The hope of alienating Antwerp from France decided England to continue the war, and attempt the immediate passage of the Rhine—Austria, on the other side, carried away by the hope of recovering Italy, yielded to the views of England, and consented to continue the war—The Frankfort propositions are repudiated, and M. de Caulaincourt is informed that the Allied Powers will be made acquainted with his tardy acceptance of the proposed basis, but nothing is said about the continuation of hostilities—Forces at the disposal of the Allied Powers, in the event of an immediate resumption of hostilities—They have at their disposal an actual force of 220,000 men, which in spring might be increased to 600,000—They flatter themselves that Napoleon will not have quite 100,000 to oppose them—Various plans for the passage of the Rhine—The Prussians wish to march straight on Metz and Paris; the Austrians, on the contrary, contemplate returning to Switzerland, to effect a counter revolution there, and separate Italy from France—The Austrian plan obtains: The Passage of the Rhine at Bâle, on the 21st December, 1813, and the Revolution in Switzerland—Abolition of the act of mediation—Fruitless efforts of the Emperor Alexander in favor of Switzerland—March of the Allies towards the eastern frontier of France—Arrival of the Grand Allied Army at Langres, and Marshal Blucher at Nancy—Napoleon, surprised by the unexpected invasion, has no longer leisure to meditate over the great preparations he had contemplated, and finds himself with little more than the troops that remained at the end of 1813—He establishes the depôts of [redacted] different regiments at Paris, and despatches rapidly thither conscripts raised in t[redacted]tre and west of France—He establishes at Paris extra magazines for the [redacted]pment of the new recruits, and forms of these recruits Divisions of Reserve, a[redacted]Divisions of the Young Guard—Napoleon orders Marshals Suchet and Soult to send him each a detachment, and orders that of Suchet to march to Lyons, that of Soult [redacted] Paris—Napoleon sends at first the Old Guard under Mortier to Langres, the Young Guard under Ney to Epinal, then orders the Marshals Victor, Marmont, and Macdonald, to join Ney and Mortier with the remains of the Army of Germany, at Châlons, where he intends to join them with the troops organized at Paris—Before leaving the capital, Napoleon assembles the Legislative Body—Communications to the Senate and Legislative Body—State of feeling in these two assemblies—Desire of the Legislative Body to know what has taken place in the late negotiations—Communications made to this assembly—Report of M. Lainé on these communications—Adjournment of the Legislative Body—Sharp reproaches addressed by Napoleon to the members of this assembly—Attempt to resume the Frankfort negotiations—Embassy of M. de Caulaincourt to the *avant-posts* of the Allied Armies—Evasive reply of M. de Metternich, who, without entering into the question of the resumption of negotiations, declares that the Allies await the arrival of Lord Castlereagh, who is actually on his way to the head-quarters of the Allies—Last measures of Napoleon on leaving Paris—His farewell to his wife and son, whom he never beholds again.

HISTORY

OF THE

CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE OF FRANCE

UNDER

NAPOLEON.

BOOK LI.

THE INVASION.

NAPOLEON had just brought back the French army to the Rhine in the most deplorable condition. The guard was reduced from 40,000 to 10,000 men. D'Oudinot's corps (the 12th), de Reynier's (the 7th), d'Angereau's (the 16th), de Bertrand's (the 4th),—all now collected into one body under General Morand—did not amount to twelve thousand fighting men on the day of their entrance into Mayence, which they were charged to defend. Marmont's and Ney's corps, appointed, under Marmont, to defend the Rhine, from Manheim to Coblentz, had not 8,000 men under arms. The second, under Victor, had at the utmost, 5,000 men to defend the Upper Rhine, from Strasbourg to Bâle. Macdonald's corps, and Lauriston's (the 11th and 5th), assembled under Marshal Macdonald, and, destined for the Lower Rhine, had not 9,000 efficient men to defend the banks of this noble river from Coblentz to Arnheim. The French cavalry, divided into four bodies, ill-mounted, or else actually on foot, could not muster 10,000 cavalry soldiers fit for service. The Poles, reduced almost to nothing, had been sent to Sedan, where their depôt was, to try to recruit. In short, a mass of stragglers, without arms, without clothes, bearing about them the germs of typhus fever, with which they infected every place through which they passed, recrossed the frontiers in small troops. It was almost a repetition of the retreat from Russia, with this difference—that there remained about 60,000

men under arms, and that instead of falling back upon resentful Germany, we were retiring into France, where we indeed found a home, but a home desolate and laid waste. The disaster of Moscow might have appeared only an accident, but an accident mighty as the destiny that presided over our fortunes; but the campaign of 1813 following upon that of 1812, bore witness to the total desertion of fortune, and the ruin of a system to which was opposed the interest as well as the good sense of the civilized world, and which even the vastest genius was not sufficient to maintain against the current of events.

If such was the condition of things in the locality where Napoleon had commanded in person, it was scarcely more satisfactory elsewhere; and his lieutenants, whether in Italy or in Spain, had not been more fortunate than himself.

Prince Eugene, appointed to defend the Julian Alps, had succeeded in drawing upon the old sources that supplied the army of Italy, and by recruiting in Piedmont, Tuscany, Provence, and Dauphiné, he had succeeded in raising 50,000 soldiers, instead of 80,000, for which he had received orders.

Of these he had formed six divisions of infantry and one of cavalry, the soldiers were young, but the officers were experienced, and with their assistance he had endeavoured to keep the Drave and the Save from Willach to Laybach, covering the Tyrol with his left wing, and Carniola with his right. After having maintained this extensive line of operations during the months of August, September, and October, constantly expecting the Neapolitans, who never came; he had seen the Austrians present themselves in masses in the passes of Carinthia, he had seen his army dwindle down through the desertion of the Croats and the Italians, and he had successively fallen back, first upon the Isonzo, and afterwards on the Tagliamento. The defection of Bavaria, by opening all the passages of the Tyrol upon his left, had rendered his position still more difficult, and in his anxiety to cover at the same time Verona and Trieste, he had divided his army into two bodies. He had sent General Grenier to Bassano with 15,000 men, while he endeavoured with 20,000, by manœuvring between the Tagliamento and the Piave, to cover Friouli and Venice. It was the studying General Bonaparte's campaigns that inspired him with the idea of sending General Grenier into the valley of Bassano, for in returning through this valley, the General might throw himself upon the Austrian flank, while General Giflenga tried with some thousand men to oppose them in front between Trente and Roveredo. But it avails little to borrow the ideas of great captains, if we cannot, at the same time, possess ourselves of their precision and energy in execution. Thus General Grenier lost most precious time wandering uselessly about; and Prince Eugene, who had at his disposal not more than 20,000 men to resist the Austrian column coming from Laybach, was afraid of being thrown back upon the Adige—that is to say, behind the entrance to the valley of Bassano, which would have separated him from General Grenier. He then

recalled the latter, in order to retire finally to Verona. He had thus abandoned to the Austrians Carniola, Friuli, the Italian Tyrol, and only kept the fortresses, that is to say, Osopo, Palma-Nova, and Venice. The necessity of leaving garrisons in these important fortresses, and the desertion of the troops, had reduced his army to 36,000 fighting men, whilst the adverse generals, Hiller and Bellegarde, had 60,000 at their disposal, independent of the Tyrolean insurgents.

Once established on the Adige, Prince Eugene again took heart, and attacking the Austrians, sometimes on his left towards Roveredo, sometimes in front towards Caldiero, he killed or captured 7,000 or 8,000 in various engagements. He had thus succeeded in inspiring his adversaries with a certain amount of respect; but he had in his rear, Italy, that had fallen away from us, in consequence of the sufferings entailed by the war, and whom the priests and the English were exciting to revolt, and whom Murat did not endeavour to win back to us; all these circumstances presented difficulties which rendered it doubtful whether Prince Eugene could maintain his position. He could only answer for his own fidelity, simply, alas! for his own. The desolating intelligence from Leipsig had confounded and thoroughly shaken the different courts of Italy, though they were all of French origin. As to Prince Eugene, the husband, as we have seen, of a Bavarian princess, his father-in-law had sent an officer to inform him of the imperative reasons that had detached Bavaria from France, and to offer him an Italian principality if he consented to abandon the cause of Napoleon. Prince Eugene, overwhelmed with grief in thinking of his wife and children whom he loved, and whom he feared soon to see deprived of everything, replied that being indebted to Napoleon for the position he held, he could not think of abandoning him, that he should soon, perhaps, be obliged to seek an asylum at Munich, but he was certain the King of Bavaria, would rather receive a son-in-law deprived of a crown than lost to honour. Prince Eugene, after this noble reply contented himself with communicating to Napoleon an exact account of the interview.

The close of the year 1813 had been still more disastrous in Spain than in Italy. We must remember that Napoleon, immediately after the battle of Vittoria, being exceedingly irritated against his brother Joseph and Marshal Jourdan, had dispatched Marshal Soult to Spain, to re-establish our affairs there, and to render his authority more impressive, had conferred on him the rank of imperial lieutenant. Marshal Soult, whose quarrels with King Joseph we have not forgotten, returning armed with power to order the arrest of this prince, if he resisted, had felt a vain-glorious satisfaction, which, unfortunately for our cause, he was doomed soon to expiate. In an order of the day, insulting alike to Joseph and to Marshal Jourdan, he had imputed our misfortune in Spain, not to circumstances, but to the incapacity and cowardice of those who had preceded him in authority, not foreseeing that he thus deprived himself of every excuse in the circumstances in which he was soon after placed. He had immediately entered on the

duties of his office, and turned his attention to the re-organization of the army. Instead of allowing it to be portioned out into the army of Andalusia, the army of the Centre, the army of Portugal, and the Nord, an arrangement that presented serious inconveniences, Marshal Soult distributed the army into simple divisions, commanded by excellent generals, of whom there was a large number in the army of Spain. The organization of this army had been originally so good that it had withstood every reverse. After having distributed the army into ten divisions, of which one was a body of reserve, he confided the command of the right to General Reille; he gave the centre to General Count d'Erlon, and the left to General Clausel. The latter, after the battle of Vittoria, having succeeded by a miracle of courage in reaching Saragossa, had entered France by Jaca, and had just joined Soult with 15,000 men. This movement had certainly the disadvantage of leaving Saragossa unprotected, but it possessed the advantage of concentrating our forces against the English, who were our most formidable enemies in Spain, and it was natural to expect some favourable result from the judicious employment of these troops. The army in Spain, in respect to military qualification, was unrivalled, especially since the losses we had experienced in Russia and in Germany. They were the bravest soldiers, the most warlike, the most inured to fatigue, that could then be found in Europe. But they were at the same time irritated, disgusted at seeing themselves during six years victimised, not alone to the carrying out of a disastrous enterprise, but to the incapacity and rivalry of their commanders. With immense confidence in themselves, the soldiers had none in their generals, with the exception of Reille and Clausel, and they consequently expected nothing but defeat. This want of confidence in their commanders completely destroyed the spirit of discipline which had been already considerably weakened by want and privation. Long unaccustomed to having food provided for them, and living solely on what they tore from a population they hated, and by whom they were hated, they looked upon themselves as masters of everything within their reach, and even if they returned to France, it was not probable they would change their mode of thinking, if they did not alter their manner of living. Covered with rags, embrowned by exposure to the sun, discontented, arrogant, commanded by officers in a still more lamentable plight, and who dared not show their ragged garments, they presented the most heart-rending of melancholy spectacles, that of brave soldiers struggling with vice and want. A great general who could have obtained a mastery over their minds, and led them again to victory, might have rendered them the greatest army in the world.

Napoleon, for fear of disorganizing the only provinces in Spain where the war had not proved disastrous, did not wish to withdraw Marshal Suchet from Arragon, and for the reasons we have already mentioned, he chose Soult. This marshal, who had acquired great military fame, less, certainly, in Spain, where he had already served, than elsewhere, was not received by the army with unqualified confidence. However, he was capable of repairing much of the mischief

that had been done. He had to do with a formidable enemy, we mean the Anglo-Portuguese army, reckoning 45,000 English, and 15,000 Portuguese, elated with victory; and in addition to these 30,000 or 40,000 Spaniards, the best soldiers in Spain. It was certainly possible with 70,000 French to make head against this army, numerically greater than ours, but much inferior in quality, with the exception of the English.

Lord Wellington, even after the battle of Vittoria, hesitated to penetrate into France, so he besieged St. Sebastian and Pampeluna, rather to find a pretext for temporizing, than to obtain possession of these two posts, which were scarcely worth the trouble of a siege. To protect this two-fold enterprise against the reprisals of the French, he had distributed his army with considerable ability, and surmounted, as much as possible, local difficulties. St. Sebastian, as is well known, is situate on the borders of the sea, nearly at the mouth of the Bidassoa, and at the extremity of the valley of Bastan. Pampeluna, on the contrary, the capital of Navarre, is situate on the opposite side of the valley, and in the basin of the Ebro. Lord Wellington had confided the siege of St. Sebastian to the Spanish army of Freyre, assisted by one Portuguese and two English divisions. These troops were of course posted near the sea, at the extremity of the valley of Bastan. There were in the neighbourhood of St. Estevan, about the centre of the valley of Bastan, three English divisions, ready to make a descent on St. Sebastian, or to march through the valley, and throw themselves on Navarre, thus aiding the other three English divisions, that were covering the siege of Pampeluna, which was confided to the Spanish troops under General Morillo. With such a distribution of his forces, the English general thought himself tolerably well prepared to meet events whatever turn they might take. Had he however been attacked with promptness and secrecy, it is by no means certain that he could have defended himself on every side. Aware of this, he was not without uneasiness, and guarded his position with extreme vigilance.

The French army was distributed in the valley of Saint Jean-Pied-de-Port, which serves as a basin to the Nive, and runs to the sea in a direction almost parallel to the valley of Bastan. Saint Jean-de-Port, which encloses the famous defile of Roncevaux, is the most important place on the upper basin of the Nive, as Bayonne, situate at the confluence of the Nive and the Adour is the principal point *en route* to the sea. A body of troops might with pretty equal chance of success, debouch by this valley, and throw themselves either on the column that was besieging St. Sebastian, or on that which was besieging Pampeluna, always bearing in mind that they should act so as to prevent the concentration of the adverse forces. There were some reasons however in favor of an attack on St. Sebastian. In the first place, St. Sebastian was more closely pressed, then the road thither was short and good, the journey could be made direct through Yrun, whilst that to reach Pampeluna, it would be necessary to traverse the entire valley of Saint Jean-Pied-de-Port, and pass through the

defile of Roncevaux. Both plans presented pretty much the same amount of facility, but to succeed in the execution of either, precision and celerity would be needed to drive back from French soil, the enemy just ready to plant his foot upon it.

On the 24th July, Marshal Soult marched forth, at the head of almost his entire army, leaving General Vilatte, with the body of reserve, in advance of Bayonne, and bringing with him about eighty pieces of cannon, taken from the arsenal of Bayonne, and drawn by horses, saved from the disaster of Vittoria. On the 25th he had debouched in the upper valley of the Bastan, with General D'Erlon's corps, and in the valley of Roncevaux, with the corps of Generals Reille and Clausel. The latter had found little difficulty in driving back to Pampeluna the Portuguese and two English divisions that defended the entrance to Navarre. But the Count D'Erlon, to reach the Bastan, had encountered considerable opposition from General Hill, in forcing the *col de Moya*. He had, however, succeeded with a loss of 2,000 men, the enemy losing on that occasion 3,000. All would have been well, if on the following day, (the 26th) the Count D'Erlon had been able quickly to rejoin our right, commanded by Generals Reille and Clausel. But the entire of the 26th was lost in rallying the troops, which proves that a grave error had been committed by the commanders, in not debouching simultaneously by the valley of Roncevaux, in order to fall suddenly on the English divisions, scattered in front of Navarre. When on the morning of the 27th Count D'Erlon joined Clausel and Reille, the English were already in a strong position in front of Pampeluna. Their forces consisted of four divisions, two English, one Portuguese, and one Spanish; the situation was precisely one of those where we had always attacked at a disadvantage, Moreover, the enemy was about to be strengthened by two divisions, hastening by forced marches from the valley of Bastan. In fact, Lord Wellington, having on the night of the 25th, learned our approach, turned to profit the entire of the 26th, which we had lost, and brought up his forces from Bastan to Navarre. Even whilst awaiting the expected divisions, the English commander had four perfectly fit for action. General Clausel, whose precision of glance in estimating the strength of a position, equalled his energy in action, was averse to attacking the English in front, but recommended that the position should be turned by making an attack on Pampeluna; General Soult not coinciding in his opinion, a strong position was attacked in front, and we had the same fortune there as at Vimeiro, Talavera, Albuera, and Salamanca. We killed a large number of the enemy, we lost as many ourselves, and we remained at the foot of the position without having carried it. The combat was renewed on the 28th, but without greater success, for the English had been reinforced in the meantime. On the 29th our troops were obliged to return from Navarre into France, after having lost from 11,000 to 12,000 men, and killed or wounded 12,000 of the enemy in the space of four days. But these losses were much more severe for us than for Lord Wellington. We had exhausted our resources,

whilst his were yet in good condition. Our troops had displayed greater valour than ever, and if they had not triumphed, they were not disappointed in their hopes, for they had long since ceased to expect anything either from the ability of their leaders, or the kind favors of fortune. The soldiers soon resumed their habits of indiscipline, and sentiments of contempt for their generals; they were in part disbanded, and living at the expense of the French peasants. In this manner, desertion soon equalized the losses on both sides, and each army reckoned from 13,000 to 14,000 men less in the ranks. Unfortunately, the efforts made at the two sieges had produced little result, and Lord Wellington, confining himself to the investiture of Pampeluna, had turned his principal efforts towards St. Sebastian, where the French General Rey supported with the aid of 2,500 men, a memorable siege. Three times had he repulsed the English at the mouth of the breach, after having caused them enormous losses.

Although repulsed, the army, touched by the heroism of the garrison of St. Sebastian, wished to assist them, and Marshal Soult having returned to Bayonne, made an attempt to aid this brave garrison, which supported so nobly the honour of the French arms. He had passed the Bidassoa and attacked the heights of St. Martial, defended by the Spanish army and two English divisions. The result of this battle was the same as that of all those where we had engaged the English in a defensible position. We caused them great losses, equal or superior to our own, thanks to the valour of our soldiers, but we were obliged to repass the Bidassoa, then swollen with rain, and on the 8th of September we saw the garrison of St. Sebastian surrender, after one of the most noble defences recorded in history. Happily for us, the siege of Pampeluna furnished Lord Wellington sufficient reason for not entering France, at least immediately. Marshal Soult, with an army reduced from 70,000 to only a little more than 50,000 men, had established his left wing on the Nive, round Saint Jean-Pied-de-Port, whilst with his right wing he occupied the banks of the Bidassoa. His left wing being in a valley, his centre and his right in another, there was in his line of operations a lengthened elevation, and here the strength of the position was doubtful. To alter this state of things, he would have been obliged to abandon a portion of the French territory, and it was natural to suppose he would hesitate before making such a sacrifice.

In this manner were passed the summer and the commencement of autumn on the Bidassoa. On his side, Marshal Suchet had resolved, on learning the disaster of Vittoria, to evacuate the kingdom of Valencia, though the sacrifice was a painful one. It certainly would have been better not to imitate the error committed at Dantzig, Stettin, Hambourg, Magdebourg, and Dresden, but rather abandon the possession of the most important places, than that a general should leave in his rear garrisons that he could not assist, and whose absence diminished considerably the efficiency of our armies. But the reiterated instructions of the War Minister, founded on the value that was attached to keeping possession of the Mediterranean shores, had induced the

Marshal to leave garrisons in a great number of places. He had left 12,000 men at Lagonta, 400 in each of the forts of Denia, Peniscola, and Morella; 4,000 at Tortosa, 1,000 at Mequinenza, 4,000 at Lerida, the same number at Tarragona, with money, provisions, ammunition, good officers—in a word, every means of defence for a year. After having deprived himself of these detachments, he had returned to Arragon at the head of only 25,000 soldiers, but men in the vigour of health, well-dressed, well-fed, regretted everywhere by the people through whose territory they passed, and whom they had spared the horrors attendant on war. Marshal Suchet had at first wished to fall back on Saragossa, but Mina having seized it since the departure of General Clausel, he had been obliged to retire to Barcelona, and to abandon Arragon, in order to defend Catalonia against the Anglo-Sicilian army, which did not amount to less than 50,000 men. Judging that the garrison of Tarragona was not in a condition to make an effective defence, Marshal Suchet had for a moment resumed offensive operations, put the enemy to flight, reached Tarragona, blew up the works, and brought the garrison away, so that he now only left in his rear the garrisons of Sagonta, Tortosa, Mequinenza, Lérida, Peniscola, Morella, and Denia. It was quite enough in the existing state of European affairs! Not wishing to allow the enemy to attain a too decisive advantage, he attacked them anew at the *Col d' Ordal*, and after a most brilliant engagement, had forced the English to retire to the sea shore.

The events of the summer and autumn had thus been somewhat less disastrous in this part of the Peninsula than in the other, but if there and elsewhere the fortresses had been evacuated, we might have assembled a noble army of at least 40,000 men, amply provided with every necessary, and led by a chief who possessed the entire confidence of the soldiers; such an army would have contributed to defend our frontiers victoriously. Unfortunately, in the south as in the north, the vain hope of quickly recovering a chimerical grandeur had perverted the judgment of Napoleon, and deprived France of those resources which would have powerfully aided to avert her misfortunes.

Marshal Soult, in quest of French combinations, would willingly have made use of the army of Arragon, to make some important move against Lord Wellington. He at one time wished that Marshal Suchet, traversing Catalonia and Arragon, would join him by passing through Lerida, Saragossa, Tudela, and Pampeluna, with about 25,000 men. At another time Marshal Soult expressed a wish that Suchet, making an immense *detour* through Perpignan, Toulouse, and Bayonne, should join him to debouch *en masse* against the English. The former of these plans exposed Marshal Suchet to the risk attendant on a march of more than one hundred leagues, between the Anglo-Sicilian army, which amounted to 70,000 men, including the Catalonians, and the army of Lord Wellington, which reckoned 100,000 soldiers; that is to say, Marshal Suchet would be exposed to the danger of being overwhelmed by these combined forces, or of being thrust back into Spain, where he would have been, so to speak, cast

into an abyss. The second plan, by condemning him to a journey of one hundred and fifty leagues through France, would abandon all the fortresses in Catalonia, and on the frontiers of Rousillon, to the Anglo-Sicilian army, and this risk was to be incurred for a doubtful advantage, for it was by no means certain that Marshal Soult, not having been able to conquer the English with 70,000 men, would succeed in doing so with 90,000; his army not having been deficient on the former occasions in numerical strength. Each of these projects had been pronounced impracticable, and it was only the termination of the war in Spain which, in putting an end to the alliance between the English and the Spaniards, could rid us of both; excepting indeed that the English might, at a later period, appear off our coasts. At length, on the 7th of October, Marshal Soult's right wing having been surprised at Andaye, he had lost 2,400 men, and had been obliged to make to the enemy the first concession they had received of French territory. Pampeluna had opened its gates on the 31st, and Lord Wellington, having no motive to pause on the frontiers, had been led, almost in spite of himself, to cross.

The situation of our armies was then disheartening on every side. On the Rhine we had 50,000 or 60,000 men worn out from fatigue, followed by an equal number of stragglers and invalids, and having to contend with 300,000 men of the European coalition; in Italy we had 36,000 men in juxta position on the Adige with 60,000 Austrians, and burdened with the difficult task of holding Italy in check, that was weary of our rule, and of restraining Murat, who was ready to abandon us; on the frontier of Spain we had 50,000 veterans, disheartened by misfortune, scarcely able to hold the western Pyrenees against 100,000 victorious soldiers under Lord Wellington; and on this same frontier we had 25,000 more old veterans, in excellent condition certainly, but called upon to defend the eastern Pyrenees against more than 70,000 English, Sicilians, and Catalonians. Such was the exact position of our affairs, numerically noted down. Napoleon had, it is true, proved a hundred times with what prodigious rapidity he could create resources, but he had never before found himself in such distress. More than 140,000 of our best troops were dispersed in different European fortresses; there remained in France only deserted depôts, which even in 1813 had made an effort to drill raw recruits in two or three months, and had sent them forth, officered by the few experienced men they still possessed. Undoubtedly there were still in the regiments that returned to France experienced soldiers and officers, but the authorities were now about to send to them recruits, ill-dressed, ill-drilled, in order that these old soldiers might do for the recruits what the depôts had neither time nor capability to effect; in fact, they were to be constrained to employ in instructing these conscripts the time they would have needed for repose, if the enemy had left them leisure for any. Our fortresses, which would have served as a support to the army, were, as we have said, stripped of all means of defence. Sending an immense amount of war material beyond the frontiers had deprived our home fortresses of indispensable necessaries. We had sent to

Magdebourg and to Hambourg what was wanted at Strasbourg and Metz, and to Alexandria what would have been needed at Grenoble. Even a part of the Lille artillery was still at the camp of Boulogne. But it was not alone the *matériel* of war in which we were deficient. Our engineer officers, so numerous, so skilful, so brave, were scattered through more than a hundred foreign cities. We had hardly time to form some cohorts of national guards to hasten to Strasbourg, to Landau, to Metz, to Lille. Thus, in order to conquer the world, which was now escaping from her grasp, France had left herself defenceless. Our finances, formerly so prosperous, managed with admirable regularity, were now as exhausted as our armies, through the chimera of universal domination. The municipal lands seized to liquidate the debt of 1811 and 1812, and to supply the deficiency of 1813, had remained unsold. It was doubtful whether purchasers could be found for ten millions. The paper which represented the anticipated price, sunk from 15 to 20 per cent., although nearly the entire of what had been issued was still in the coffers of the bank, and in those of the crown itself, which had taken more than seventy millions. The moral condition of the country was still more wretched, if possible, than the *matérial*. The soldiers, convinced of the folly of the policy for which they were pouring forth their blood, murmured aloud, though they were ever ready, in presence of the enemy, to sustain the national honour. The nation, deeply irritated that the victories of Lutzen and Bautzen had not been profited of to conclude a peace, looked upon themselves as sacrificed to a mad ambition, now that they had experienced the grave inconveniences of an irresponsible government. Disillusioned as to the genius of Napoleon, having never believed in his prudence, but having always had faith in his invincibility, they were at one and the same time disgusted with his government, doubtful of his military capability, and terrified at the approach of enemies who were advancing in masses; the French people, in a word, were morally broken down, at the very moment when, to avert the impending danger, they would have needed all the patriotic enthusiasm with which they were animated in 1792, or at least the confiding admiration with which the First Consul had inspired them in 1800. Never, in short, was a people in a state of more profound dejection called upon to encounter a more imminent peril.

To a certainty, if the victorious foreigners who suspected a part of these truths, had known them in their full extent, they would have paused on the banks of the Rhine only a single day, a sufficient time to provide ammunition and provisions, and would have crossed this river, which since 1795 had been regarded as an inviolable frontier; they would have marched straight to Paris, that city where, but a short while before, the Genius of Victory seemed to have taken up a permanent abode. But the allies, fatigued by their extraordinary efforts, even still astonished at their success, notwithstanding the two campaigns that had terminated to their advantage, felt disposed to pause on the banks of the Rhine. It was the last respite that fortune seemed willing to grant ere she abandoned us for ever.

More than one cause contributed to the mode of conduct then adopted by the Allies, but the glory acquired by the French nation was the determining motive. If the policy of Napoleon had raised the civilized world against him, the glory he had shed over the French people, the unexampled bravery with which we had supported his gigantic enterprises, the recollection of how the French nation had risen to a man in 1792, to repulse the aggression of all Europe, furnished a motive of reflection to the continental powers, who had most at stake in a contest with France. They hated us intensely, but they feared us quite as much. The idea of crossing the Rhine, and of braving within their own realm this people, who had inundated all Europe with their victorious armies, amongst whom there was not a man who had not borne arms, and where each individual might, indeed, blame the ambition of his chief, but who would, in all probability support him, with might and main, if the enemy, having touched the frontiers of France, should attempt to cross. These considerations disturbed, intimidated the most experienced of the allied ministers and generals. Besides, after having expelled Napoleon from Germany, what more was there to desire? Would it be wise after an unexpected triumph to tempt fortune again, to fail perhaps in a rash enterprise, to be repulsed beyond the Rhine, and all for want of having had the prudence to pause at that point? This would render Napoleon more exacting than ever, and awaken in him pretensions that were nearly extinct, and would condemn the Allies to an endless war, because they had not the good sense to make peace at the proper time, acting in this respect as unwisely as Napoleon had done at Prague. And then, had not the war already been sufficiently desolating? There was not an army in Europe that did not bear about with them strong testimony of how deeply they had suffered, not alone at Moscow, Lutzen, Bautzen, and Dresden, where they had been conquered, but at Katzbach, Gross-Beeren, Kulm, Dennewitz, and Leipzig, where they had been victorious. With the exception of the Prussians, amongst whom there prevailed a sort of national *furor*, excited by the influence of secret societies, the desire of peace was general amongst the military men of all nations. Though very brave and proud of their success, the Russians had not wished to cross the Oder, they were still more unwilling to cross the Rhine; they thought they had done quite enough in fighting their way from Moscow to Mayence, and that they really had no interest in going further. The Austrians, who had been fighting two and twenty years, and who had ejected from Austria and Germany the conqueror of Marengo, Austrelitz, and Wagram, were desirous of rest. They saw in the prolongation of the war only a means of satisfying the hatred of Prussia, and of increasing the influence of the Russians and English, with, at the same time, the risk of a general defeat. They were, therefore, strongly inclined to peace, which it now seemed probable could be made on a permanent basis. At the head of the military men most anxious for peace, was Prince Schwartzenberg. He was tired of the violence of the Prussians, the airs of superiority assumed by the

Russians, and the obstinacy of the English, and had spoken strongly in favor of peace, and in the camp of the Allies no one opposed the soundness of his arguments. And what was very extraordinary, the celebrated English commander, Lord Wellington, who was the first in Europe that gave a check to Napoleon's power, and whose fame was constantly increasing, even he seemed to hesitate on approaching the formidable frontiers of France. And yet, he could not be reproached with timidity, for in 1810 and in 1811 he had remained alone in arms on the continent, running at every moment the risk of being pushed into the ocean by the army of France. Even after the decisive battle of Vittoria, which had taken place at our very threshold, Lord Wellington had not advanced a step, and in reply to the urgent commands of his government, he said that a general ought to reflect seriously before placing his foot on the burning soil of France. Alas! our enemies who had so often misunderstood us, and who were doomed to misunderstand us again, flattered us still. They were not aware that a long misuse of our national strength had exhausted our resources, and that disgusted with a prolonged despotism, and indignant with a licentious ambition, the people of France had become isolated from the government, and were inclined to look upon the war as a matter interesting to the legislators exclusively, but in which the people had no direct interest. The error into which our enemies had fallen was not fated to be of long duration, but it was very general; they paid us the homage of trembling at the idea of putting a foot on French soil.

This pacific disposition, observable amongst the military world, with the exception of the Prussians, was less prevalent amongst the statesmen of the coalition, if we except M. de Metternich. This sagacious minister, who in 1813 had displayed a rare combination of tact and frankness, of determination, and of prudence, shrunk from the idea of exposing the fortunes of Austria to fresh risks, and in this respect as in many others, was entirely of the same opinion as his master. M. de Metternich and the Emperor Francis had decided on war, because Germany called loudly for it, because the opportunity of re-establishing the affairs of Austria, and of saving the independence of Germany, was too glorious not to be profited of; but having attained their object, they did not wish, in attempting to win back all the former glory of Austria, to incur the risk of losing what they had already gained, and at the same time run the chance of increasing beyond measure, Russian preponderance in Europe, Russian preponderance in Germany, and English preponderance on the seas. Austria, certain of no longer having the grand duchy of Warsaw on her northern frontiers, and assured of recovering all she had been deprived of in Poland to constitute this duchy, and of regaining the frontier of the Inn, Tyrol, Illyria, and part of Friuli, and of no longer being obliged to maintain the Confederation of the Rhine, ought to consider, and did consider herself perfectly satisfied. The Emperor Francis, constant in adversity and moderate in prosperity, was decidedly of this opinion, and M. de Metternich, the faithful

interpreter of his thoughts, coincided with him entirely. As to the rest, the marriage of Marie Louise, concocted solely for the interests of the empire, added very little to these excellent reasons. But, if the Allies passed the Rhine, a question immediately arose, which had not yet presented itself to the minds of any but a few inconsolable old men, whose regrets had lately been converted into sanguine hopes, and this question was nothing less than the total overthrow of Napoleon himself. To resist his intolerable rule, to restrain, if possible, his excessive ambition, had been at first the desire of all his enemies; to hurl him from the throne of France had never entered into anybody's mind. However, to conquer a man, whose title to consideration was based solely on his victories; and after having conquered him in Russia, in Poland, in Germany, to conquer him perhaps in France itself, if the attempt were made; such a series of victories might naturally awaken the idea of attacking his person, and depriving him by the sword of a crown gained by the sword. The bare idea of such a possibility threw the Prussians into extacies of joy, and stirred the peaceful and calm-beating heart of Frederic-William. As for Alexander, whom Napoleon had personally humiliated, he had never dreamed of so splendid a vengeance, but presented by circumstances, he did not reject it; on the contrary, his most ardent wish was to enjoy such a revenge in its fullest extent. But, supposing the object attained, what was to become of the throne of France, thus rendered vacant? The Prussians cared little about that, provided they could hurl from the pinnacle of his grandeur, him, who so often had trampled them under foot, and Alexander was equally indifferent to consequences, if he could only be revenged for the contumelious contempt he had experienced from the haughty conqueror. But hatred blinded neither the Emperor Francis nor his minister; they were guided solely by a regard for the interests of Austria, and they asked themselves the question, if the Allies crossed the Rhine, what would they do on the other side?

As to Napoleon's being married to Marie-Louise, although the Emperor Francis was not a bad father, that circumstance touched him and his minister very slightly. They were influenced by very different feelings. No power in the world had suffered so much as Austria from the spirit of innovation, or had struggled so vigorously against it during three centuries. In the 18th century, she had encountered the great Frederich, and had lost Silesia. During the French revolution, she had encountered Napoleon, and lost the Low Countries Suabia, Italy, and the Germanic crown. If we go back even to the time of the Protestant reformation, we find her, under Charles V. struggling against Luther, that is to say, against the spirit of innovation. An abhorrence of revolutions was a hereditary policy of Austria's, suspended, perhaps, during a short interval under Joseph II., but soon resumed by his successors, and as active as far-sighted under Francis II. and M. de Metternich. They, therefore, asked each other, with an anxiety unshared by any of the Allies, to whom should they confide the government of this stormy France that

held in her hand, not alone the terrible sword of war, but the not less destructive torch of revolution. As to the Bourbons, who would have suited them in many respects, they scarcely thought of them, because that France and Europe thought still less of them, and besides, the capability of the Bourbons was doubtful. It did not appear either to the Emperor or his minister easy to replace a soldier of genius, who was willing to repress the spirit of revolution, from which he had himself arisen, not through prejudice, because he entertained none, but through the two-fold love of order and of power; thinking, then, less of the interests of Marie-Louise, than of the dangers of a French revolution, ready to burst forth again in all its horrors, the Emperor Francis and M. de Metternich were not at all inclined to dethrone Napoleon.

Satisfied with the obtained results, and fearing rather than desiring the vacancy of the French throne, the Emperor Francis and M. de. Metternich decided, that once arrived at the banks of the Rhine, it would be better to make Napoleon fresh offers of peace, and, a most unexpected circumstance, England, the persevering enemy of the Bonaparte family, acquiesced in the views entertained by the cabinet of Vienna. The British cabinet having formerly loudly proclaimed their desire of reinstating the Bourbons on the throne of France, having suffered on this account during twenty years, the attack of the opposition, by whom they were reproached with carrying on a ruinous war, in which the interests of England were no ways involved; the English ministers at length seemed to fear this reproach, and by dint of defending themselves, in the end, ceased to merit the accusation. Lord Aberdeen, the British representative at the court of the Allies, one of the most upright and enlightened ministers that England ever possessed, he, too, was of M. de Metternich's opinion, and did not hesitate to say that if Napoleon made the necessary concessions it would be better to come to terms, and treat him in all respects as a perfectly legitimate sovereign.

Once arrived on the banks of the Rhine, the Allies were obliged to come to some resolution on this point. In fact certain antecedents necessitated them to do so. M. de Metternich, on the very morrow of Austria's coalition with the belligerent powers, and whilst all were still in Bohemia, even then M. de Metternich had proposed and obtained the general sanction to some important resolutions, all drawn up with the view of obviating the effects of that spirit of discord which usually prevails in coalitions. In the first place, as the sovereigns and their principal ministers were assembled, he proposed that they should not separate until the war should be terminated. Secondly, he had asked and obtained the nomination of a Commander-in-Chief who, as we have seen, was the Prince de Schwartzenberg. Thirdly, he had proposed as the object for which the war was to be carried on, not conquest, but the restitution to each sovereign of what he had lost. Now, this proposition might give rise to great uncertainty in the case of Prussia and Austria, both of which had during the past twenty years undergone such numerous transforma-

tions; but to obviate these complications, the Austrian minister had specified that the condition in which Austria and Prussia actually were before the war of 1805, should be regarded as their normal state, and it was moreover decided that the reconquered provinces should be placed as pledges in the hands of the Allies. Lastly, M. de Metternich had induced the sovereigns to consent that the war should not be reckoned by campaigns or by years, but by periods measured by the importance of the results obtained. Thus, the progress to the Rhine and the arrival of the army there, was to constitute the first period. The second if they were constrained to undertake it, should terminate at the heights of the Voges and the Ardennes. The third period, if they were absolutely compelled to carry the war so far, should finish only in Paris itself. The consequence of these profoundly thoughtful resolutions was, that without reverting to the motive, the Allies, as each period terminated, paused before commencing the next, to examine deliberately whether peace might not be possible.

Thus, influenced by all the reasons we adduced, Austria, without being at all anxious to take the initiative in fresh negotiations, was still desirous of letting Napoleon know that this was the moment to treat; she wished to advise him to act more wisely than he had done at Prague, and to endeavour, moreover, to conserve a throne, whose security had not hitherto been questioned, but which might soon become doubtful; she wished to counsel him to guard carefully the fair territory of France, and to limit his ambition within the frontier, laid down by the treaty of Lunéville. The allied sovereigns and their ministers being at that moment assembled at Frankfort, chance furnished them an opportunity of communicating their opinion to Napoleon, an opinion at that time perfectly sincere, for they had not then crossed the Rhine.

M. de Saint Aignan had been formerly French minister at Weimar. This gentleman combined, with an enlightened intellect, a mild and conciliating temper; he possessed, moreover, the advantages, at that time highly esteemed, of being the brother-in-law of M. de Caulaincourt, and it was well known, throughout Europe, that M. de Caulaincourt was the only person in the court of France, then so subservient to the will of Napoleon, who had the wisdom to uphold a peace policy; and this fact, added to the important position he held, rendered him in the eyes of Europe one of the most respectable ministers of the French empire. His brother-in-law had been, by a forced interpretation of the rights of war, looked upon as a prisoner, when the Allies entered Weimar. He had been first banished to Tœplitz, but afterwards recalled to Frankfort, where he was indemnified by every mark of personal respect for a temporary annoyance. He was asked to undertake a mission to Paris, for the purpose of suggesting to Napoleon the idea of a Congress, which should assemble immediately on the frontiers, and treat of peace upon the double basis of the natural limits of France, and a complete independence for all nations.

M. de Metternich was the first who made a confidential communication

to M. de Saint Aignan touching the nature of this mission. He assured him that Europe was desirous of peace, that she wished it upon honourable terms, and such as every nation in Europe might accept; that she was well aware that, after twenty years of successive victories, France had acquired the right to be respected, and she should enjoy her privilege; that it was not the intention of the Allies to try to re-establish the ancient order of things; that Austria did not seek to recover all she had formerly possessed; she would be satisfied to take a suitable and secure position. This was the limit of the pretensions made by the allied princes, and in proof of the sincerity of their intentions, M. de Metternich was commissioned to propose that France should be limited to her natural boundaries, that is to say—the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees, and nothing beyond. He added besides, that it was time for all parties to think of peace, and for France not less than for the rest of Europe; and for Napoleon in particular, more than for any of the belligerent parties, for he had raised up against him a fearful tempest, and the personal irritation he had excited was constantly increasing; that it inspired the combatants with a warlike rage it was difficult to repress; that if he reflected wisely he would see that the sentiments that agitated Europe had penetrated into France itself, and it might happen that he should soon find himself as friendless in his own country as he was in the rest of the world; that the time for entering into an honourable treaty was come, but if the propitious moment were allowed to pass, the war would become intense, implacable, and without hope of cessation until either the one party or the other should be destroyed. Besides, the allied sovereigns would not separate, they would in common make every necessary sacrifice; their offers of peace were sincere, and they wished peace to be universal by land and sea; Russia, Prussia, England herself wished it. It was now necessary to lay all distrust aside, for the desire to stay the effusion of blood was universal; but it would be well not to fall again into the deplorable error committed at Prague, where in consequence of not believing in Austria, and of not coming to a determination in time, France lost an opportunity of making peace on terms that she could never hope to obtain again. To confirm what he said, M. de Metternich introduced successively M. de Nesselrode and Lord Aberdeen, who repeated in the most succinct but decided terms all that the Austrian minister had said. Lord Aberdeen affirmed, in the name of the British cabinet, that they did not wish either to degrade or humiliate France; that they had no intention of disputing her natural frontiers, for they knew there were certain events to which it was better not to revert; but he repeated that beyond these limits they were decided not to yield to France either territory, or actual authority, nor even influence, with the exception of what all the great Powers exercised on one another, when they were content to make use of the advantages of their position without abusing them.

Influenced by all he had seen and heard, M. de Saint Aignan did not entertain the slightest doubt of the sincerity of this language. He replied that taken by surprise, and not having any positive mis-

sion, he could listen to everything without disobeying instructions that he had never received, but he would report exactly what he had been commissioned to say. He however thought it better for the sake of correctness, that he should be furnished with a written recapitulation of the proposed conditions. M. de Metternich saw no difficulty in the matter, and remitted to M. de Saint Aignan a short but concise note containing the following enunciations.

"The allied sovereigns will not separate, but will remain united, whatever may happen, until peace is concluded. This peace must be general, and prevail on the sea as well as on land. It must be founded on the principle of the independence of every nation within its limits, either natural or historical. The Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees, will mark the frontiers of France, but she must confine herself within these limits: Holland is to be independent, and her frontiers on the French side shall be afterwards determined; Italy also must be independent, and her Austrian frontiers on the Friuli, as well as her French frontiers on the Piedmontese borders, will be a question of future consideration. The Bourbon dynasty must be restored in Spain." (This condition was a *sine qua non.*)

England also was to make restitution beyond the seas, and each nation was to enjoy an entire freedom of trade as should be laid down according to the laws of nations, &c. On this last point alone Lord Aberdeen raised some difficulties, but M. de Metternich, who acted as secretary, satisfied all parties by the use of those vague terms that we have reported. M. de Saint Aignan immediately set out for Mayence, bearing with him the most affectionate messages for M. de Caulaincourt. The purport of these verbal missives was that the Allies believed him so honourable and so upright that they were content to accept him as arbiter of the conditions of peace, if Napoleon would invest him with full powers for that purpose.

M. de Saint Aignan arrived on the 11th November at Mayence, and on the 14th at Paris. He did not delay to communicate his mission to M. de Bassano, who immediately forwarded the communication to Napoleon. This minister was, it must be admitted, considerably changed. Of his former dangerous infatuation, he now only preserved the exterior semblance. His disposition and turn of thought had yielded to the weight of events. He had, consequently, the wisdom to speak favorably to Napoleon of the propositions of Frankfort. They were certainly generous and advantageous! What could we, in fact, desire beyond the Alps and the Rhine? What had we gained by passing these strong and well-defined frontiers? Nothing but the hatred of other nations, the constant effusion of their blood and ours, with thrones for some of the Emperor's family, the greater number of which were at that moment overturned, or made instrumental to our injury, because that our government of neighbouring people had assumed the humiliating form of foreign rule; and if, in short, either through pride or fraternal affection, the Emperor absolutely demanded some territory beyond the Rhine or the Alps, did not

the terms employed for fixing the limits of Holland and of Italy, offer an opportunity of obtaining these family indemnifications?

There was not the slightest ground for refusing the indirect but positive propositions of Frankfort. In fact, apoleon did not for a moment think of refusing, though his pride suffered severely, but he was now paying the penalty of his errors, for any concession was an admission of weakness. But not to accept instantly the propositions just arrived from Frankfort would be giving the Allies an opportunity of withdrawing their offer when they should discover the destitution of France, the dispersion of her resources from Cadiz to Dantzic, her moral dejection, her estrangement from apoleon; when, especially, the English people, elated by the accounts of the late successes of the Allies, should learn these things, they would wish to push their advantage to the last extremity. This danger existed, and it was, in fact, the most serious; but there was another also; it was being obliged to avow himself, what the Emperor feared the Allies would soon guess, and betraying by too ready concessions the powerlessness to which he was reduced.

Compliance on the part of a person less obstinate than apoleon, might have appeared dictated by a spirit of conciliation, but for him to yield every point immediately, to fall unhesitatingly into the views of the Allies, would be to acknowledge his utter distress. There, side by side with the danger of resisting, was the no less imminent peril of yielding; a not unfrequent consequence of erroneous conduct, which leads us into positions, beset with difficulties, and where there is as much to be feared from drawing back as from advancing.

However, the greatest error would be to display a spirit of obstinacy by furnishing those, who reluctantly made the propositions of Frankfort, an excuse to withdraw their offers; it was better to consent to everything, and that immediately, than run the risk of exposing a secret, which, after all, could not be long concealed. apoleon wished by replying promptly to evince an eagerness to negotiate, and having only required the afternoon of the 15th for reflection, he sent his answer on the 16th. But the terms of the reply were not happily chosen. There was no allusion to the proposed bases of negotiation, consequently no acceptance of these bases. Manheim was mentioned as a place for the assembly of the future congress, a city, whose locality indicated the intention of entering on business without delay; in short, the reply contained ironical phrases, particularly bitter against England, *a-propos* of the independence of nations, which France, it was remarked, demanded both by sea and land. Such was the substance of the reply, a reply which certainly was not delayed, for it was instantly despatched to Marshal Marmont, who commanded at Mayence, with orders to forward it at once to Frankfort. The silence observed by the Emperor on the proposed conditions was, without doubt, a part of his policy, and intended to prevent the Allies divining his reduced position; for this silence seemed to indicate that he was quite ready to accept every proposition, but it had the disadvantage of discouraging the Allies, if they were sincere, and if they were not so,

it furnished them a plausible opportunity for withdrawing their offers.

When Napoleon arrived at Paris, he found the public there plunged in the most profound dejection, in fact almost in despair, but at the same time strongly excited against him. The police, however active they might be, or however arbitrary, could scarcely suppress the manifestation of this general feeling. Although nobody, not even a member of the government was in the secret of the negotiations of Prague, although Napoleon had made his ministers and even the chancellor of Cambaceres himself believe, that the Allies had tried to humiliate him, even to the point of depriving him of Venice, which was not true, the public were convinced that if the negotiations had failed, it was through his fault. The French could not forgive him for having neglected the favourable opportunities for concluding peace which the victories of Lutzen and Bautzen afforded. They regarded his ambition as extravagant, cruel to the mass of mankind, and fatal to France. After the disasters of 1813 added to those of 1812, the French people did not think themselves in a position to resist the formidable coalition, which from the Rhine, the Adige, and the Pyrenees threatened France with the invasion of a million soldiers. The newspaper writers, either gagged or bribed, and whom no person believed, even when they did speak the truth, had received instructions from the Duke of Rovigo upon the manner in which they were to represent the disasters of this campaign. The frost had served as an explanation of the misfortunes of 1812; the defection of the Allies was an excuse for the discomfitures of 1813. Besides these excuses another was found in the unexpected explosion of the bridge of Leipsig. But for the criminal conduct of the Saxons and the Bavarians, exclaimed the apologists; but for the fault of the officer, who blew up the bridge of Leipsig, Napoleon, after conquering the Allies, would have returned to the Rhine, bearing with him to France the terms of an honourable peace. Then there was no term of execration that was not lavished on the Bavarians and still more on the Saxons. They also persisted in declaring that Colonel Montfort was to be tried by court-martial for the catastrophe of the bridge of Leipsig, though whatever such persons might say, Colonel Montfort was perfectly innocent. Nobody believed these assertions, and like liars, who when they perceive they are not believed, raise their voices still higher, these bribed journalists repeated with more bitterness their appointed lesson, without obtaining more credence. "He wants to sacrifice all our children to his wild ambition," was the cry of every family from Paris, even to the extremity of the most remote provinces. They did not deny the genius of Napoleon, they did worse, they did not think of it at all, in order to avoid remembering his passion for wars and conquests. The horror which the guillotine formerly inspired the French people they now felt at the prospect of war. The universal topic of conversation was the battle-fields of Spain and Germany, the millions of dying, of wounded, and of sick, expiring without attendance on the fields of Leipsig and

Vittoria. They represented Napoleon as a kind of war demon, thirsting for blood, and happy only when surrounded by desolation and death. France, formerly disgusted with liberty after ten years of revolution, was now disgusted with despotism, after fifteen years of military rule, and the effusion of human blood from one end of Europe to the other. The violence of the prefects, in carrying off the children of the humbler classes as conscripts, and those of the higher classes to form guards of honour; worrying families whose sons did not respond to the summons by the demand for subsidies; employing moveable columns against the malcontents who traversed the country; often treating French provinces as if they were portions of a conquered kingdom, converting into compulsory taxes the pretended voluntary gifts proposed and acceded to by their representatives; the seizure at one and the same time of goods, horses, cattle; a suspicious police, reporting the slightest observations, and arbitrarily imprisoning those who were accused of making them, and always suspected of being present even when they were not; a deep misery in the seaports in consequence of the suspension of commerce; equal distress on the frontiers, across which our traffic formerly found a safe passage, but where a million foreign bayonets now intercepted the transport of a single bale of merchandize; in a word, an inexpressible and universal dread of invasion—all these evils, arising at the same time from the uncontrolled will of one individual, furnished a severe lesson, which effaced that of the revolution, and which, without rendering France republican, awakened a desire for a constitutional monarchy. All the old parties, which had almost sunk into oblivion, began again to revive. The revolutionists made some efforts, but it must be avowed, without effect. Some, but certainly not a numerous party, attached themselves to Napoleon through fear of the Bourbons, whom they hated; they wished to make him dictator, on condition that he would have recourse to extraordinary measures, and that he would call the people to a movement similar to that of 1792. But these were maniacs, dreaming of a past that could never be recalled. The movement of 1792 had been only a burst of indignation on the part of France, when unjustly assailed by all Europe; but now the cases were reversed, and allied Europe experienced against France as strong a sentiment of indignation as France had formerly entertained against the rest of Europe. The royalists, partizans of the house of Burbon, revived by hopes excited by the priests, now more daring and more numerous than the revolutionists, began to raise their voices and obtain an audience. France had almost forgotten the Bourbons, from whom she had been separated by events of such magnitude that they seemed to occupy the space of centuries in the public mind; she feared, besides, the Bourbon manner of thinking, their accessories, their resentments; but terrified at the further prospect of Imperial government, and determinately repulsing republican rule, France began to think that the Bourbons, restrained by wise laws, might offer a means of escaping from despotism as well as from anarchy. As to the rest, it was only men of the highest order of mind that carried their views further. The mass of the people hailed the

name of the Bourbons in order to stop the cry of war, which was devouring their children, increasing taxation, and paralyzing commerce.

When a government begins to be in danger, an indubitable evidence may be found in the temper of mind displayed by the functionaries. In 1813 and 1814, the functionaries of the empire were low-spirited, dejected, discouraged, and though a certain number affected a violent zeal, the greater part without avowing it, entertained as inimical a feeling towards Napoleon as his greatest enemies, because they felt that in compromising himself, he had involved them all. But danger had infused somewhat of a spirit of independence into some of the higher functionaries. They told Napoleon at the close of 1812, and they repeated it to him at the end of 1813, that without peace, all would be destroyed, they as well as he. Soldiers of the highest rank that he had loaded with gifts, but to whom he denied leisure to enjoy them, maintained a sullen silence, or said harshly that no resource remained but to carry on the war. Two most sensible men, one a soldier, the other a government functionary, Berthier and Cambacérès, no longer concealed their consternation. Berthier fell ill; Cambacérès fell into a fit of devotion, which being utterly unlike any affection he had ever before manifested, was considered a visible consequence of profound dejection. Concealing his real opinion from Napoleon, as from one he deemed incorrigible, he asked permission to retire, in order to finish his days in repose and piety. Some others, less resigned, had manifested their vexation more openly. Ney, it is said, had given vent to violent expressions; Marmont had presumed upon the liberty of an old acquaintance to offer some advice; Macdonald, with a rather uncouth mixture of craft and simplicity, had expressed his opinion; M. de Caulaincourt had given utterance to his, with his accustomed courage, and a sort of respectful haughtiness. All were unanimous on one point—a desire for peace. And there was the Empress, who, without giving an advice, for she did not know who was right or wrong, did nothing but weep. She feared for herself, for her son, even for Napoleon, whom she loved at that time, as a young woman loves the man she has married.

This idea of peace, which pursued him like a bitter reproach, annoyed Napoleon, so much the more, because not having desired, when it depended on himself to obtain it, he now felt that desiring, he could no longer procure it, and that peace so long repulsed, at last eluded his pursuit. Strange and fatal vengeance, evolved from our own misdeeds. Europe had certainly just offered with sincerity to resume negotiations, but that sincerity might be doubted by one who was not in the councils of the Allies, and it was besides probable they would not persevere in the offer as soon as our weakness, which could not be long concealed, should become publicly known. Napoleon then had very little faith in the possibility of an acceptable peace, and only expected it from a last desperate struggle, kept up on our frontiers or beyond. This was why he addressed the following reply to all his censors, whether open or secret. "It is easy," said he to them, "to speak of peace, but it is not so easy to conclude it.

Europe seems to offer peace, but she does not wish it sincerely. She has conceived the hope of destroying us, and this hope, once conceived, she will never abandon, unless we can make her feel the impossibility of success. You believe that it is by humiliating ourselves, we shall disarm her; you are mistaken. The more yielding you are, the more exacting she will become, and from demand to demand, she will lead you on to terms of peace that you could not accept. She offers you the line of the Rhine and the Alps, and even some part of Piedmont. These certainly are favourable conditions; but if you appear willing to accept, she will soon propose the frontiers of 1790. Well, can I accept them—I, to whom the natural frontiers have been transmitted by the Republic? There has been perhaps a moment, when we ought to have shown ourselves more moderate, but in the actual state of things, too manifest a yielding on our part, would be an avowal of our distress that would render the prospect of peace more remote than ever. We must fight once more, fight desperately, and if we conquer, then we ought certainly hasten to conclude peace, and in such a work, believe me, none will be more eager than I."

Unfortunately each moment added to the correctness of Napoleon's assertions, for Europe learning gradually the full extent of our weakness, no longer thought of making any concession, and if we wished for peace now, we ought to be able to win it by force. But after having believed Napoleon too easily, when he did not speak sincerely, the Allies now refused to believe, when what he said was only too true. They only saw in the language we have just quoted, his obstinate temper, his insatiable passion for war (a passion that had once ruled him, but which had passed away for ever), and many persons who cared little whether the peace were honourable or not, whether France conserved or yielded her natural frontiers, provided the imperial throne was saved, and that they preserved their posts; such people said that *this man* (it was so they designated Napoleon), that *this man* was mad, that he was ruining to his own destruction, and would destroy them all at the same time. Thus the truth that Napoleon would not listen to, when it might have been profitably heard, now re-appeared under the most painful forms, evidenced, not alone in the strong cry of the people, but in the affliction of faithful friends, in the sulky ill-humour of selfish adherents, and often even in the insolence of the vilest courtiers, from whose breasts, despair at the loss of place had banished every feeling of respect.

When an erroneous opinion takes possession of the public mind, and this opinion is sure to be implacable, because it is erroneous, it demands a victim. There was one in those days that all the power of Napoleon could not refuse, we will not say, to the public, that was condemned to silence, but to his own indignant courtiers, and this victim was M. de Bassano. It was generally known, though the particulars had not been ascertained, that at Prague, France might have obtained a glorious peace, and that the Emperor had refused; it was

known that now again the Emperor had just received a very satisfactory proposition, and an ante-chamber rumour reported that he had not replied in a suitable manner; and for all these faults M. de Bassano was blamed; his pride and want of foresight having, it was said, caused all our misfortunes. It was said that instead of enlightening Napoleon as to the true state of things, M. de Bassano had done all he could to deceive him, as if any one could be responsible for the acts of so self-willed a character. M. de Bassano had been, undoubtedly, a complaisant minister, but more complying than dangerous, or it is doubtful if even by joining M. de Caulaincourt, he could have obtained a more favourable result at Prague. He certainly ought to have tried, and if he had not saved France, he would at least have exonerated himself. He was now overwhelmed with the common injustice that springs from passion; and M. de Caulaincourt, who owed him a grudge for not having supported his opinion at Prague; M. de Talleyrand, who amused his leisure by incessantly rallying him; both declared that to obtain peace, it was necessary to persuade the world they really desired it, and that the least humiliating mode of proving this disposition was to dismiss M. de Bassano.

Napoleon resigned himself to this sacrifice, the first, but useless expiation of his errors. He knew very well that M. de Bassano was not the real culprit, that an attack on the minister was a blow directed against himself, and though his sense of justice as well as his pride was wounded by the sacrifice, the Emperor consented to withdraw M. de Bassano from the administration of foreign affairs, for the danger was pressing, and he felt that on every side he was obliged to make sacrifices on the altar of public opinion. Thus, under despotic as well as under free governments, the instrument that has been used for the perpetration of a wrong is punished, only under an absolute government, the pride of the monarch is made to suffer, for he is obliged to condemn himself in punishing his tool. Besides, the avowal is at once vexatious and fruitless, because the sacrifice is made when the evil is irreparable.

The two authors of M. de Bassano's disgrace, M. Talleyrand and De Caulaincourt, were alone capable of filling his place. Napoleon first thought of the former, who had more weight in Europe than the latter, though he was less respected. M. de Talleyrand, with his wonderful political sagacity, saw the termination of the empire approaching; however he was not sufficiently assured of the event to refuse the direction of foreign affairs, a post to which he originally owed his greatness. But distrusting Napoleon's despotism as much as Napoleon distrusted his fidelity, he still set much value on remaining a great dignitary. Now, on this point, Napoleon had laid down for himself a principle, which was never to combine in the same individual the ministerial power with the quality of a grand dignitary. In his empire, such as he had desired it, the great dignitaries, emanating from the Royal authority, watching over the different branches of the administration, possessed somewhat of the inviolability of the monarch, as they also partook in some degree of his august character. Now, he did not wish his ministers to be

inviolable, and M. de Talleyrand less than another. But, M. de Talleyrand ardently wished to hold this position, particularly under such a master as Napoleon. Through the operation of these despicable motives, there was a misunderstanding, and M. de Caulaincourt became minister of foreign affairs. There could not be found a minister more estimable, more esteemed, or more welcome to the other governments of Europe.

Napoleon profited of the opportunity to effect some other changes in the ministry; some of these were the consequence of that which had just been accomplished; others were the result of a more remote design. In withdrawing M. de Bassano from the direction of foreign affairs, Napoleon did not intend to leave this faithful servant without office; he gave him the post of Secretary of State, where his duties brought him into the most intimate communication with the monarch. This was bringing him back to the starting-point of his ambition, but it was necessary to yield to public opinion, at that time stronger than Napoleon himself. M. Daru at that time held the office of Secretary of State. There were still fewer motives for removing from office a person, whose absence was not desired either by the public or the monarch. M. Daru, a minister, upright, firm, indefatigable, who had always accompanied Napoleon in his most difficult affairs, and shared his most trying dangers, was besides reputed to have given very useful advice on many occasions, and nobody could see a public advantage in his removal from office. Napoleon, who himself held these opinions, constituted M. Daru one of the two war ministers. General Clarke, Duke of Feltre, had the administration of the *personnel*, M. de Cessac that of the *matériel*. The latter had long done good service, and was capable of doing still more, but Napoleon, forced to make vacancies, allowed him to forestall the time of his retirement from office, and dismissed him with many well-merited marks of distinction. M. Daru succeeded M. de Cessac. And, lastly, Judge Reynier, Duke of Massa, a magistrate, upright and laborious in the discharge of his duties, but advanced in age, and no longer able to support the fatigues of office. Napoleon, though esteeming him highly, had already removed him temporarily in consequence of a long illness, and he profited of the present occasion to replace him permanently by M. le Comte Molé, whose intelligence, name, and manner of thinking pleased him. Napoleon, not wishing that this substitution of another in his place, should seem a disgrace for the Duke of Massa, resolved to make him president of the legislative body. M. de Massa was not member of the legislative corps, and consequently had no chance of being placed upon the list of candidates for the presidency, which this body had a right to present. But in those days, slight difficulties were not allowed to stand in the way. It was decided that a change should be effected in the constitution by means of a *senatus-consulte*, and that the legislative body should no longer contribute to the nomination of the president by a presentation of candidates. This was not a well-chosen moment to give offence to a body, that following the prevailing example of the times,

seemed to acquire courage in proportion as Napoleon lost his strength; however, the changes proceeded, and this *senatus-consulte*, less insignificant than it seemed to be, was prepared with several others more useful and more urgent.

The question now was, on the eve of the last terrible struggle against combined Europe, to raise men and money, to raise them in abundance and quickly. These two means, so essential to the carrying on war, were exhausted. In the preceding month of October, before leaving Dresden for Leipsic, Napoleon had commissioned Marie Louise to repair to the senate to procure the conscription of 1815, which was to furnish 160,000 conscripts, and besides, an extra levy of 120,000 men from the classes of 1812, 1813, and 1814 who were already disbanded. The senate had made no more difficulty of granting these 280,000 men, than it had made in abandoning to Napoleon so many victims of war, then lying buried in the plains of Castille, of Germany, of Poland, and of Russia. Unfortunately, these immense levies, whose prompt enrolment was so desirable, were more easily decreed than put into execution.

Amongst the 280,000 men, whose enrolment had been decided in October, we must consider as wholly unfit for service in the approaching conscription of 1815, those who, thanks to the system of forestallments had been sent as soldiers at 18 and 19 years of age, that is to say children, brave but weak, and incapable of supporting the hardships of war. Europe had seen thousands of these children perish, who, full of ardour on the battle-field, died of fatigue on the high roads or in the hospitals. Napoleon did not wish any more of these, and if he asked the conscription of 1815, it was with the intention of forming a body of reserve which would fill the depôts and occupy the garrisons. He could then only reckon on the 120,000 men of the former conscriptions. But to raise this levy, the only one that could be useful, would be extremely difficult, because it would be necessary to seek men already discharged, and who, having already on several occasions, furnished substitutes, would find themselves drawn as conscripts, a third and even a fourth time. This falling back on the conscripts, who had already served, though it procured soldiers of a better quality, was also attended by the grave disadvantage of exciting the most violent discontent, and requiring the most delicate management, which rendered the levies much less productive. Under these circumstances, married men could not be called out, nor men necesssary to the support of their families, and thus, whilst 100,000 men were expected, they were glad to obtain 60,000.

Justifying himself by the pressure of circumstances, Napoleon conceived the idea of falling back on all the classes that had already served, and taking all the unmarried men, whose services were not indispensable to their families. Reckoning at 300,000, the men whom he might raise in this way, he caused a *senatus-consulte* to be drawn up, which authorized him to raise the number from the discharged classes, re-ascending from 1813 to 1803. These 300,000 men joined to the 280,000 decreed in October, raised to about 600,000 the levies,

about to be called out during this winter, and never, it must be said, had such exorbitant demands been made on a population, or any so destructive to future generations. It was not the opposition of the senate that was feared, but that of private families, and it was very doubtful whether, even threatened with legal compulsion, they could be brought to satisfy such demands. Certainly, if the 600,000 men, originally talked of, could have been assembled, drilled, and embodied in time, there would have been more than a sufficient number of troops to drive back the Allies beyond the frontiers. But, what with the public discontent on the subject of the war, and what with the prevailing opinion that it was carried on merely to satisfy Napoleon's personal ambition, how many amongst these 600,000 men would respond to the call of government; and above all, how much time would be needed to convert these recruits into disciplined soldiers? Nobody could say. Napoleon, nevertheless, accustomed to the submission of the people, and to the incapacity and tardiness of his adversaries, hoped to obtain a large proportion of the levies, and calculated on having to the approaching April to drill them for the coming campaign.

But whether these 600,000 men arrived a little earlier or later, it would be necessary to pay them, and Napoleon's finances, which had been so well administered during fifteen years, had now, like all the other branches of his power, sunk under protracted abuses. We have seen how his budgets of 750 millions (without reckoning the 120 millions for *les frais de perception*) had successively mounted to 1,000 millions, after the annexation of Rome, of Tuscany, of Illyria, of Holland, and the Hanseatic cities. The war, having since 1812 assumed gigantic proportions, the budget of 1813 had mounted to 1,191 millions, without the *frais de perception*. The expenses of the last war, those at least that were cleared by the budget, having mounted from 600 to 700 millions, it was supposed that this budget would touch 1,300 millions (1,420, including the *frais de perception*), at that time esteemed an enormous amount. Thus, within two years, the budget had mounted from 1,000 to 1,400 millions, and if we refer to the market prices of that period, we shall be able to estimate the actual amount of property this rate of taxation assumes to be in the country. Still it would be all as nothing if we could only make head against our difficulties. But, independent of the 100 millions in excess of our expenses, imputable to war, there was a deficiency of 70 millions in the revenue. It was then 170 millions, which by an excess on one side and a deficiency on the other, represented our real shortcomings for the year. But there was another deficiency still more embarrassing. ot being able to have recourse to a loan, and not wishing to have recourse to taxation, Napoleon had conceived the idea of selling the municipal property, and of realizing the value in advance, by means of bills on the *caisse d'amortissement*. 46 millions of these bills had been applied to the budget of 1811; 77 to that of 1812; and 149 to the budget of 1813. This expedient had completely failed. More than two millions of this municipal property

had not been sold, in consequence of the tedious formalities, the public distress, and the general distrust. The bills issued not having come into general circulation, were exposed to an increasing depreciation, and yet, perhaps at the utmost, more than from 25 to 30 millions had not been offered to the public, the precaution having been taken of distributing the greater part to the contractors. Notwithstanding these precautions, there was already a loss of from 15 to 20 per cent. There was thus at the same time a loss of the 272 millions, which were to have been raised by bills, and the 170 millions deficient in the budget of 1813, which made a total deficit of 442 millions; an overwhelming deficiency at a time when there were no means of raising credit, unless the public and private banks could be induced to receive the bills of the *caisse d'amortissement*. Ten millions had been given to the Bank of France, 62 millions to the *caisse de service*, 52 millions to the *douaine extraordinaire*, which exhausted, as we have seen, the last disposable means to be drawn from this source.

The privy purse of the crown remained, containing the savings Napoleon had made out of the civil list. Napoleon, as we have already said, thanks to an admirable spirit of order, had saved 135,000,000 from the civil list. He had placed 17,000,000 of this in the Mont-Napoleon at Milan, 8,000,000 in the Banque de France, 4,000,000 in the salt works. He had lent 13,000,000 to the *caisse de service*, and he had employed 26,000,000 in the purchase of bills of the *caisse d'amortissement*. There remained, besides, three or four millions to meet the current expenses of the crown, and 63,000,000 in gold and silver deposited in the vaults in Tuilleries, a last resource, which he guarded religiously, not as a means of providing for himself in a foreign country (such forethought was beneath his lofty ambition), but to sustain his last struggle against the universal rising of the nations.

With the exception of these 63,000,000, Napoleon had exhausted all the public banks to force them to take the bills that represented the value of the municipal property. Having found, in this way, the means of passing 150,000,000 of these bills, there remained of the total deficiency of 442,000,000, of which we have spoken, an actual deficiency of about 300,000,000, which there were no means of meeting, every resource being absolutely exhausted.

In such a state of things, the necessity of recurring to taxation became imperative, But if Napoleon, on the plea of necessity, had made the enormous demand of 600,000 men, he might easily, on the same plea, ask for a few millions in money. Moreover, taxation was the only source of revenue which had hitherto been carefully managed, the only source that remained intact, though indirect contributions, at all times unpopular, were then loudly decried under the name of *droits rèunis*. But the direct taxation might still bear a fresh burden, and that, too, pretty heavy. By adding merely thirty centimes to the income tax of 1813, it was easy to raise 80,000,000, available on the instant. It was possible to obtain 30,000,000 more by doubling the *contribution mobilière*. It was therefore decreed in council, that

the payment of these sums should be required in the months of November, December, and January. There was an addition of one fifth made on the salt duty, and of a tenth on the indirect taxes. These extra taxes were expected to produce immediately 120,000,000, without over pressure, excepting, perhaps, pressing a little on the taxes that would be required for the year 1814. With these 120,000,000, with the ordinary taxes, with the treasure concealed in the Tuilleries, and certain postponements that state creditors were obliged to submit to, means were found to satisfy the more pressing wants.

The question now was to legalize these demands for money. Napoleon, by a decree dated from the banks of the Rhine, had fixed the 2nd of December for the assemblage of the legislative corps, hoping to be able to make use of this body to obtain extraordinary resources, and to awaken the patriotism of the nation. Already a certain number of the legislators had repaired to Paris; but they were not found quite so well-disposed as was desired, for, with the rapid increase of danger, and the no less rapid decay of Napoleon's prestige, the spirit of independence had revived in the public mind. Disagreeable discussions were therefore to be feared, and besides, however prompt might be the adoption of the proposed measures, they could not be effected before the middle of December, and the receipt of the money should then be deferred to January, whilst it was actually wanted at the moment. It was then resolved that the levy of the extra centimes should be made by a decree, by which means a month was gained. This manner of proceeding, which would be utterly impossible under a legitimate and regular *régime*, was authorised by more than one precedent. In fact, sometimes to furnish the equipment of cavalry soldiers, voted by the departments; sometimes in order to distribute more equally the *réquisitions*, by converting them into public contributions, the prefects had not hesitated to levy the additional centimes, by virtue of their personal authority; and whether through a feeling of necessity—whether through the habit of submission, nobody had complained. The Emperor might, surely, in the presence of absolute danger, venture as far as the prefects, and by a decree passed on the 11th November, the next day but one after his arrival at Paris, he commanded the immediate payment of the sums we have enumerated. The crime was not great if we compare it with the illegal arts the Imperial government had often committed; and besides, there was the excuse of the imminence of the danger. But this act, like many others, proves what value was then set on the laws. The meeting of the legislative corps becoming less necessary, since extraordinary levies had been raised by a simple decree, the assembly was adjourned from the 2nd to the 19th of December, in order to escape importunate discussions. The precaution, as we shall soon see, was not a wise one, for these legislators, all staying at Paris, and passing their time idly, or in imbibing the opinions of the capital, did not become more indulgent towards a government, basely flattered when all-powerful, freely criticised the moment it began to decline; and

threatened on the eve of its fall by a universal outburst. Another inconvenience attendant on the assemblage of the legislative corps, which the government wished to avoid, was the election of the fourth series (the legislative body was divided into five), whose powers expired at the commencement of 1813, and the election had already been deferred a year. To assemble the electors at this moment being attended with quite as much danger as assembling the deputies, it was decided to defer the election of the fourth series another year. This measure, and that which abolished the list of candidates for the presidency of the legislative body, that also of a fresh call for 300,000 men, raised simply by the authority of the senate, which was supposed to be always sitting and always submissive, as it actually was to the penultiem hour of the empire. The assembly was convoked for the 15th November, and presented with these three measures.

The meeting of the senate was distinguished by unusual pomp. There was a desire to awaken the spirit of the nation, to speak to the people's heart, to excite their patriotic devotedness. Unfortunately, when nations are spoken to, either rarely or too late, the orators are liable to be listened to with distrust, or to be misunderstood. The government orator related in vain the late reverses of our armies, he declaimed in vain against the perfidy of our Allies, against the fatal imprudence committed at the bridge of Leipsig; he pointed out in vain what France had to fear from a victorious coalition; he produced little effect on an impassable and degraded senate, he wrought only one conviction, that indeed the danger was imminent, and that it was necessary to call on the nation to make great efforts without, alas! the hope of seeing such an appeal responded to after fifteen years' reckless and fruitless war. The 300,000 men to be drawn from the discharged conscripts were voted without a single objection. The adjournment of the election of the fourth series was also accorded, the motive alleged being that it was of pressing necessity to assemble the legislative body, rather a singular reason when the meeting of this body had been adjourned from the 2nd to the 19th of December, though the majority of the members was in Paris. And the motive adduced for the suppression of the list of candidates for the presidency of the legislative body was not less singular. It was that perhaps the proposed candidates might be ignorant of court etiquette, or be personally unknown to the Emperor. The senate did not question the substance nor the motives of the decrees; they voted them without observation, as they were ready to vote everything, even to the day when they voted the downfall of Napoleon himself at the bidding of foreigners.

These political, military, and financial measures had occupied Napoleon incessantly since his arrival in Paris. One of his first acts, and one which might be deemed fortunate, if it had not occurred somewhat late, was to transfer the foreign correspondence from M. de Bassano to M. de Caulaincourt. M. de Metternich, on receiving M. de Bassano's reply, which was at the same time enigmatical and ironical, had replied, after consulting the allied courts, and his reply

was pretty much to this effect:—"The Allies have learned with pleasure," he said, "that the Emperor has at length recognized in M. de Saint Aignan's mission a sincere desire for peace. They are also glad that he has pointed out Manheim as a place of assembly for the congress, and will accept his choice; but," he added, "the Allies do not see with the same satisfaction the care with which the French government avoids all explanation as to the fundamental basis proposed at Frankfort, and they feel compelled to demand, as a preliminary to all negotiation, the formal adoption or rejection of the basis."

It ought to have been a source of satisfaction to the French Emperor to find the Allies still insist on the adoption of the Frankfort basis, though it might now be doubtful whether they were sincere; but the Emperor ought to hasten and take them at their word ere they retracted the propositions. The fact of M. de Caulaincourt being now manager of foreign affairs left no doubt as to the character of the reply. He urged upon Napoleon the necessity of sending such an answer as ought to have been sent on the 16th November, and he succeeded. Without losing an instant he wrote on the 2nd December that, acceding to the proposition of a congress, and accepting the principle of the independence of all nations established within their natural frontiers, the Emperor had, by implication, accepted the primary basis laid down in M. de Saint Aignan's instructions, and that now, to remove all difficulty, these were expressly accepted; that these conditions demanded great sacrifices from France, but she would willingly make these sacrifices in the cause of peace, especially if England would give up the maritime conquests which France had a right to demand of her, and consent that the same principles of negotiation should obtain on sea as on land.

It is probable that had this reply been despatched eighteen days previously, events might have taken a very different course. But now many pretexts might be made as to a change of opinion on the part of the allied powers; if better informed of our distress, they wished to retract the offers they had made at Frankfort.

In consenting to treat on the basis of the natural limits of France, Napoleon mentally resolved to retain all he possibly could beyond these limits, and in the instructions to the plenipotentiary whom he had already chosen (it was M. de Caulaincourt), he laid down the following conditions:—In consenting that he should have nothing beyond the Rhine, it was yet to be understood that he was to keep on the right bank of that river, Kehl, opposite Strasbourg, Cassel, opposite Mayence, and the city of Wesel, situated on the right bank—but which had become in some sort a French city. As to Holland, he did not despair of keeping a part of that, by abandoning the Dutch colonies to England. In any case he was resolved to dispute the limits that separated Holland from France, and to propose, first the Yssel, then the Leck, and lastly the Nahal, a frontier from which he was resolved not to retire, and which would secure to him that portion of Holland he had taken from King Louis. He also wished it to be understood that Holland was not to fall again under the authority of the House of Orange, but that it should become republic.

As to Germany, he was satisfied to renounce the Confederation of the Rhine; but on condition that no federal union should subsist between the German states, and that in restoring Magdebourg to Prussia, and Hanover to England, Hesse and Brunswick should be consolidated into the kingdom of Westphalia, independent of France, but governed by Prince Jerome.

Napoleon wished that Erfurt should be conceded to Saxony in indemnification for the grand duchy of Warsaw. He desired that Bavaria should preserve the boundary of the Inn, and this he proposed in order that he should not be obliged to give up Wurzbourg, which would necessitate an indemnification to the Duke of Wurzbourg in Italy.

In Italy, he was willing that Austria should have, besides Illyria, that is to say Laybach and Trieste, a portion of territory beyond the Isonzo, but on condition that France should advance as far into Piedmont as Austria into Friuli. All that France had possessed in the Milannaise, Piedmont, Tuscany, and the Roman States, should form an Italian kingdom, alike independant of Austria and France, and governed by Prince Eugene.

The Pope was to return to Rome, but without temporal sovereignty. Naples should belong to Murat, Sicily to the Neapolitan Bourbons. The ancient king of Piedmont should have Sardinia alone.

The Ionian Isles should be incorporated with an Italian state, if Malta were ceded to Sicily. In any other case, the Ionian Isles should belong to France with the Isle of Elba.

Spain should be restored to Ferdinand VII., and Portugal to the house of Braganza. But England should not retain any of the Spanish or Portuguese colonies.

Denmark was to keep Norway. Lastly, an article was to be inserted which should describe in less general terms, the rights of the neutral flag.

Such were the conditions that Napoleon wished to present to the future congress at Manheim. Unfortunately, he erred widely in his reckoning, and notwithstanding his profound sagacity, spite of his clear knowledge of his position, a knowledge so clear as to make him doubt whether the Allies could seriously offer him the Frankfort bases, he had still the weakness to think these propositions would be listened to at Manheim. It is true that at this moment he entertained a hope which might justify his flattering dreams, could it be realized; it was that the war would not recommence until April. If, in fact, the Allies, fatigued by this terrible campaign, should pause on the banks of the Rhine until April, and thus afford him four months to prepare his resources, he might, with the *débris* of his armies, and the 600,000 men voted by the Senate, muster at least 300,000 disciplined soldiers, and with this force combined under his powerful hand, he might thrust back from the banks of the Rhine, the enemy that would have dared to cross that river. It is certain that with 300,000 soldiers fighting on friendly soil, and within a circumscribed space, their martial spirit dilated by misfortune, the chances of success were manifold. But

would the enemy accord him these four months? Was it reasonable to suppose they would? That was the question, and on this question depended both his throne and our greatness; not our moral greatness, which was indestructible, but our material greatness, which was subject to ordinary laws.

As to the rest, the Emperor acted not as if he had four, but as if he had scarcely two months left for preparation, and he employed the resources put at his disposal with his characteristic activity, now excited beyond the ordinary pitch. The garrisons were the first places that needed looking after. They were distributed into two divisions; those of the Rhine and those of the Scheld, covering our natural frontier Huningue, Béfort, Schelestadt, Strasbourg, Landau, Mayence, Cologne, Wesel, Gorcum, Antwerp; those of the interior, covering our frontier of 1790, Metz, Thionville, Luxembourg, Mezières, Mons, Valenciennes, Lille, &c., we only name the principal. Whilst Allessandria, Mantua, Venice, Palma-Novo, Osopo, Dantzig, Flessingue, and the Texel were defended by expensive works; places indispensable to our home protection, Huningue, Strasbourg, Landau, Mayence, Metz, Mezières, Valenciennes, Lille were left utterly defenceless. The scaling ladders were standing, but stepless; the pont-levis unfit for use. The guns were not mounted: there was a want of tools, of wood for blinds, of bridges of communication between the works, of horses for transport, of smiths and carpenters. The artillery and engineer officers, who had remained in the interior of the country, were nearly all old men, unfit to support the fatigues of a siege. Provisions had not yet begun to arrive, and money, which can supply so many wants, was not forthcoming, and it was doubtful whether it could be sent in time and in sufficient quantities. In a word, we wanted garrisons, and it was to be feared, that in forming them we might weaken the active army already so much impoverished.

We endeavoured to supply first, the most pressing wants. It was of imperative necessity to transport the depôts of the several regiments from the first line of fortresses to the second, in order to disembarrass those that might be first attacked, and to put beyond the reach of the enemy those depôts that were the sources that recruited the regiments. This measure, tardily undertaken, was difficult, for not only was it necessary to transport the men, both healthy and ill, from one place to the other, but also the superintendants and the magazines. The depôts that were at Strasbourg, Landau, Mayence, Cologne, and Wesel, were transferred to Nancy, Metz, Thionville, Mezières, Lille, &c. Marshal Kellerman, Duke de Valmy, who had rendered such good service in the organization of troops, and who had commanded *en chef* at Strasbourg, Mayence, and Wesel, was appointed to the superintendance of Nancy, Metz, Mezières. This displacement was immediately commenced, notwithstanding the severity of the season.

Napoleon gave orders to the prefects to provision the garrison with the utmost speed, by paying, or promising to pay shortly, for the goods and cattle they were authorized to seize. They were to act in the same manner with regard to wood and any materials that might

be needed. The marshals commanding the active troops, Marshal Victor at Strasbourg; Marshal Marmont at Mayence; Marshal Macdonald at Cologne and Wesel; received instructions to occupy themselves as much with the organization of the different corps as with providing the garrisons. All the detachments remaining of the 32nd military division, that is to say, from the country between Hamburg and Wesel, formed the nucleus of the garrison of Wesel. The 4th corps, unfortunate *debris* of so many corps amalgamated into one, was entrusted with the defence of Mayence, under General Morand, its former *chef*. General Bertrand, who had commanded this corps in its last quarters, had been appointed Grand Marshal of the Palace in recompense for his fidelity. Strasbourg received some skeleton regiments that were to be filled up with conscripts and national guards. The known fidelity of Alsace permitted it to be entrusted to the national guards, a force of which Napoleon did not wish to make use except for garrison defences. Skeleton squadrons of artillery recruited hurriedly, furnished the *personnel* of this branch. As many good commanders as could be had were appointed, to whom were added some engineer officers, selected amongst the least aged of those that remained in France, and all were advised to employ the winter in drilling to the best of their ability. It must be acknowledged that the soldiers were not deficient in zeal.

The measures adopted for the three most important fortresses of the first line, Strasbourg, Mayence, and Wesel, were, with the exception of some local differences, carried out in all the others. In approaching old France, the National Guards were called on with more confidence to defend the country. We have just said that Napoleon was not much inclined to employ them. He of course distrusted them, because they might be, in a very disagreeable manner, the reflex of the public mind; however, his motives were not exclusively selfish. At the moment, when he demanded from the population nearly 600,000 men, he dreaded urging public discontent too far, by appealing to every class of citizen at the same time, and especially to that of fathers of families, who, for the most part composed the National Guard. Besides being deficient in the necessary equipments for his soldiers, he preferred giving clothes and guns to the army than to the National Guards. It was only in the frontier garrisons, when there was not time to throw in regular troops, that the National Guards, being ready drilled, and moreover imbued with a martial spirit, were allowed to enter and complete the garrison. The Emperor also made use of them in some large cities of the interior, when the public peace might happen to be disturbed in consequence of the general ferment, and he decided that in these cities, the principal inhabitants formed into battalions of Grenadiers and Chasseurs, armed and equipped at their own expense, and commanded by trustworthy officers, should be charged to maintain public tranquillity.

Napoleon turned his attention to the active army. To the divers woes that had assailed our troops since their return from Germany, there was now added one, more terrible than all the others—the

dreadful typhus. Originating in the over-crowded hospitals on the Elbe, imported thence to the Rhine by the wounded, the sick, the stragglers, it had made terrible ravages, particularly at Mayence. The 4th corps, which had been raised to 15,000 men, by the union of the 4th, 12th, 7th, and 15th corps, and subsequently increased to 30,000 by other additions, lost in one month half its number, and dwindled down to less than 15,000 men. From the soldiers, the contagion spread to the surrounding population, and death carried off as many of the one as of the other class. This horrible scourge had assumed, under the influence of famine, hideous and heart-rending forms. The constitution of many of our young soldiers had been so weakened by privations and fatigue, that their fingers and toes fell off piece-meal, gnawed by gangrene. The alarm became general at Mayence, and, at the earnest entreaties of the inhabitants, the authorities in the hope of diminishing the infection, had ordered the immediate removal of numbers of the sick to the interior. This proceeding had involved fresh calamities. The public roads were now seen covered with carts, each bearing thirty of these unhappy creatures, some dead, others expiring beside dead bodies, from which they could not separate. And now, the contagion began to spread from the first to the second line of fortresses, and the city of Metz was thrown into a state of terror, on learning that some soldiers had died in the hospitals of typhus.

Marshal Marmont, deeply touched by this spectacle, had laboured most strenuously to diminish the evil, and had at first prevented the removals which exposed so many unfortunate beings to perish on the high roads, and threatened with contagion our inland cities. He had seized every ship that could be converted into a hospital, and had translated the sick of one hospital to the other, without allowing them to pass from city to city. A local tax on the adjacent districts had provided for the wants of the sick, and the plague, thanks to the salutary measures adopted, had appeared, if not to diminish very much, at least to pause in its onward course. Notwithstanding these precautions, one of Marshal Marmont's regiments, the 2nd Marines, had been reduced in a month from 2,162 men to 1,054.

By the authority of the Emperor, Marshal Marmont had removed from Mayence those corps that were not indispensable to the defence of the place. The 2nd, commanded by Marshal Victor, had been already sent forward to Strasbourg; the 5th and 11th combined, under Marshal Macdonald, were sent to Cologne and Wesel. Marshal Marmont sent to Worms the 3rd and 6th, which were appointed to serve under him, and only left at Mayence the 4th, to garrison the place. Lastly, by order of Napoleon, he drew off from Mayence the Guard, both young and old, and subdivided them between Kaisers-Lutern, Deux-Ponts, Sareguemines, Sarre-Louis, Thionville, Luxembourg, Treves, &c.

Napoleon afterwards gave orders for the reorganization of the different corps. The greater part had become simple divisions, and contributed thus to form new corps. The only exception was the

2nd, quartered at Strasbourg, and located near its depôts, where the means of supplying its wants with the greatest facility and completeness were near at hand. The first proceeding was to take out of the infantry depôts all the tolerably well-drilled subjects they contained. Napoleon hoped to get an increase of 500 soldiers for each regiment, and immediately raise the infantry quartered on the Rhine to 80,000 men. The conscripts demanded by the late decrees from the discharged classes were to be sent to the nearest depôts to be drilled and equipped as soon as possible, and according as they should have two, three, or four months instruction, might increase to 100,000, 120,000, or 140,000 men, the Rhenish army. The conscripts of these same classes belonging to the frontier departments, were to be thrown into the fortresses, draughted into some skeleton regiments left behind, and there the conscripts would be drilled into doing garrison duty. These would certainly have abundant leisure to be drilled and equipped provided they had time to arrive before our fortresses should be invested.

After having bestowed these cares on the Rhenish frontier, Napoleon turned his attention to the Belgian, which would be in greater danger, if the enemy contested our natural limits. He also thought of Holland, which covered Belgium. These two countries, ill-defended, were profoundly disturbed, and it was of urgent importance to send thither a considerable body of forces. The only resources at the command of General Molitor, who was entrusted with the defence of Holland, were some foreign regiments, of suspicious fidelity, and some weakly-constituted French battalions. These were small means to oppose Bernadotte, who at this moment was advancing on Holland with the greater part of his army, and Marshal Macdonald, at thirty leagues distance with the *débris* of the 5th and 11th corps, was not likely to be of much assistance to General Molitor. Napoleon made an effort to send him some reinforcements with the utmost expedition. He had long cherished his favourite idea of saving the powerful garrisons of Dresden and Hamburg, which would, undoubtedly, have been sufficient to maintain us in the possession of Holland and Belgium. But we have seen the fate of the garrison of Dresden, made prisoners of war, by a violation of every principle of justice; and as to that of Hamburg, whilst Marshal Davout was thinking of putting himself at the head of the troops, and marching towards the Rhine, the forces of Bernadotte inundating Westphalia, had obliged him to fall back within his retrenchments. There was therefore nothing to expect on this side, and so the defences of the empire were weakened by the abstraction of 70,000 excellent soldiers. As to the regiments of Marshal Davout, that had furnished the 1st corps, which was made prisoner at Dresden, and the 13th which was shut up in Hamburg, all had their depôts in Belgium. Napoleon poured conscripts into these depôts, hoping thus to compose an army of 40,000 infantry, that he intended to put under the command of the brave General Decaen. Throwing in this manner, conscripts and national guards into the fortresses, especially into Antwerp, he reckoned that this

army, called "*l'armée du Nord,*" increased to 50,000 men, manœuvring between Utrecht, Gorcum, Breda, Berg-op-Zoom, and Antwerp, and protected by the inundations, would suffice to cover Belgium and Holland.

The army of the Rhine was then to commence seriously its own particular duties, without feeling any uneasiness to the conservation of the Low Countries, and to make head against the allied troops, that might assume the offensive, either by coming in separate columns through Cologne, Mayence, and Strasbourg, or pouring down *en masse* by one of these three roads. We have just seen that Napoleon by taking out of the depôts the men already drilled, and replacing them by conscripts drawn from the discharged classes, who could in case of emergency be dispensed from passing through the depôts, and might be sent directly to join the regiments; we have seen that Napoleon hoped, by these means, to raise first to 80, and afterwards to 140,000 men, the infantry established on the Rhine. He flattered himself that by reorganizing his cavalry and his artillery, he might increase the number to 200,000 in the spring, and ultimately to 300,000 by uniting them with the Imperial Guard. He intended to give this latter corps an extent that it had never yet possessed. To carry out this idea, he projected the following combinations.

Although attended by some serious inconveniences, the Guard, by its high military spirit, and admirable discipline, had rendered essential service in the last campaign, both by performing prodigies of valour on the field-battle, and by preserving in adversity a firmness that none of the other regiments displayed. The Guard was now reduced to about 12,000 infantry and from 3,000 to 4,000 cavalry. It consisted of two divisions of the Old Guard, grenadiers and chasseurs, two of the *moyenne* guard, fusiliers and *flanqueurs*, and four of the young guard, riflemen and light infantry. As the guard possessed many soldiers capable of becoming excellent sub-officers, it would be easy to increase its extent, without diminishing its spirit, or detracting from its oneness. Of all the corps of the army, it was that into which thousands of young men might be most easily incorporated, and where they would in the shortest time become soldiers. To facilitate his success in this project, Napoleon had another means, owing entirely to one man, and this man was the illustrious Drouot, a commanding officer of artillery in the guard, and an accomplished model of every warlike virtue. Drouot, simple in his manners, and even somewhat awkward in his address, had not at first been appreciated by Napoleon. But whilst in these incessant wars, ambition and fatigue increased simultaneously, and the slightest services were obliged to be highly recompensed, Napoleon had been struck by the conduct of Drouot, who knowing thoroughly every branch of his profession, and devoting himself to the discharge of his duties with indefatigable ardour, without seeking like many others to set a higher value on his services as difficulties increased; proportioning thus in silence his energy to danger and his zeal to the embarrassment of the government; having never flattered his master in prosperity, he

did not seek to worry him now by importunate advice, contenting himself with serving to the utmost of his ability the prince and country whom he identified in his affections and devotedness. Napoleon, like all despots of genius, was pleased with flattery, even when he did not believe it, but he could not help esteeming and seeking the society of honest men when he came in contact with them, and for this reason he had gradually acquired an affection for Drouot which increased with his reverses, and at the moment of which we now speak, he had resolved to confide to him the command of his entire Guard. He had perceived that the minister Clarke succumbed to the pressure of necessity, and even that his fidelity was beginning to be shaken. On this account he had begun to entertain serious distrust of him. He made Drouet an actual minister of the Imperial Guard without conferring any other title on him than that of his Aide-de-camp. All promotions were placed in his gift, and promotion ought to be rapid in a corps destined to increase considerably; he confided to him beside, his last resource, his "*poire pour la soif*," as he called it, his 63 millions, the fruits of his personal savings, certain that Drouot would equip the different corps of the Guard, with as much economy as could be hoped from the purest probity and the most watchful vigilance.

According to the instructions of Napoleon, the companies were to be increased from four to six in the battalions of the Guard. The battalions were to be increased to eighteen in the Old Guard, to eight in the *moyenne*, and to fifty-two in the Young Guard. The Old Guard was to be recruited with the picked men of the entire army, the *moyenne* and the Young Guard from the conscripts, taking care to choose the best. These different combinations, if put into execution, would give an increase of at least 80,000 infantry. With the cavalry, the artillery, the engineers, the parks, Napoleon expected that his forces would be little short of 100,000 men. He authorized Drouot to purchase horses, to order carriages for the guns, and to establish at Paris and Metz warehouses for equipping the soldiers. He advised him to do everything himself, to pay everything himself, without employing the mediatory services of the war minister. Drouot was to receive from the private treasurer of the Emperor whatever funds he might need.

With 200,000 soldiers of the line, and 100,000 of the Imperial Guard, Napoleon did not despair of repulsing from our land the allied armies that had dared to invade it. We shall soon see, by what he accomplished with 80,000, if this hope was presumptuous.

Napoleon next directed his thoughts to Italy and Spain. Prince Eugene was on the Adige with about 40,000 men, making himself respected by the enemy, and having a chance of being able to hold his position, notwithstanding the English attempt at debarcation, if Murat would limit his infidelity to inaction. Napoleon, not wishing to augment the number of Italians in the army of Prince Eugene, nor give Italy fresh pretexts for discontent, forbore to levy a conscription in that country, and determined to send from France a sufficient

number of conscripts. He had already raised to 28,000 recruits the portion destined for Prince Eugene in the levies voted in October, and he intended 30,000 for him out of the 300,000 men to be drawn from the discharged classes. He ordered they should be chosen in Franche-Comté, in Dauphiny, and in Provence, in order that they might have less distance to travel. Prince Eugene was to clothe these new troops from the abundant resources of Italy, then to draught them into the vacancies in his army, by which means he might have 100,000 combatants under his command in the month of April. In Italy, as elsewhere, the question was narrowed to a point—what time would elapse before the resumption of hostilities?

Lastly, though Napoleon had renounced Spain he had still an interest in the Pyrenees, now threatened by the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the English, all loudly avowing the hope of avenging the invasion of Spain by reprisals on France. The army of Arragon, under the command of Marshal Suchet, the so-called army of Spain, confided to Marshal Soult, amounted to twenty regiments each, and had their depôts between Nîmes, Montpellier, Perpignan, Carcassonne, Toulouse, Bayonne, and Bordeaux. Napoleon ordered each of these armies to detach a *cadre de bataillon* from each regiment, which could be easily done, considering the diminution they had suffered in the effective force, and to send these skeleton battalions to Montpellier, Nîmes, Toulouse, and Bordeaux, where 60,000 conscripts from the discharged classes would be assembled. Each of these forty battalions receiving 1500 recruits was to send 500 to the armies of Spain and Arragon, which would recruit these armies to the amount of 20,000 men, and supply through the length of the Pyrenees a reserve of 40,000 to profit of events.

With these various resources assembled on the frontiers of Belgium, the Rhine, of Italy and the Pyrenees, Napoleon still pertinaciously believing he had four months before him, did not despair of overcoming the prodigious difficulties of his position. But the disposition to obey his demand for recruits diminished daily; and it was not the noisy language of venal journals—it was not the silence of the senate that could transmute this reluctance into ardent patriotism. The Emperor endeavouring to render the sacrifices required of the people less sensibly felt, desired that the levies on the three discharged classes of 1813, 1812, and 1811, should be finished first, and that the anterior classes should not be proceeded with for the moment. This first levy was expected to yield from 140,000 to 150,000 men. It was only after completing this levy that recourse was had to the earlier classes, always omitting the married men, those not likely to be very useful, or those whose services were indispensable to their families. For the same reason he wished these levies to commence in the provinces immediately threatened with invasion, such as Landes, Languedoc, Franche-Comté, Alsace, Lorraine, Champagne, provinces where the military spirit was most rife, and the danger most pressing. Still influenced by prudential considerations, Napoleon postponed the conscription of 1815, which could only supply soldiers whose extreme

youth would add another source of suffering to the many woes to which the army was already exposed. If peace did not put a speedy termination to the war, he would defer the conscription of 1815 to the close of the year.

But levying men was not the sole difficulty: it would be necessary to clothe and arm them, to provide saddle and draught-horses. Napoleon established extra magazines at Paris, at Bordeaux, at Toulouse, at Montpellier, at Lyons, at Nantz, &c., for the more expeditious making up of clothes for the army. Though to provide clothing was not found an easy task, it yet presented fewer obstacles than furnishing horses. However, France was less exhausted of saddle-horses than Germany; she still possessed a considerable number of good ones. The draught-horses for the artillery and carriages were as good as could be wished. Five thousand had just been purchased. Napoleon ordered the purchase of as many more, and gave orders for ten thousand additional, for which ready money was to be paid; and these twenty thousand horses would be sufficient, with the surplus already remaining, for carrying on the war in the interior. Saddle-horses were scarce. Drouot was in want of some for the Guard. Funds were forwarded to all the regiments to purchase in their respective localities as many horses as they could.

There was an abundance of powder, of lead, of iron of all kinds, bayonets and cannon, but there was a want of guns; and this was one of the principal causes of our ruin. In the days of his prosperity, Napoleon had one million muskets in his arsenals. But in the campaign of Russia, 500,000 had been buried in the snows, and in that of Germany we lost 200,000, and in many foreign places great quantities of French arms had been sacrificed. All these losses had exhausted our arsenals. To establish forges for the manufacture of muskets, was much more difficult than to fit up stores for furnishing clothes and horses; and yet, there was no use in raising men, if they could not be equipped. It was a strange feature that characterized this policy: vast preparations were made for invasion, none for defence! France, when threatened by a foreign force, had more difficulty in procuring 300,000 muskets than 300,000 men to carry them!

Artificers were brought from the provinces where working in iron was best understood; and these men were settled either at Paris or Versailles, in order to establish manufactories for the repair or construction of fire-arms. The same was done in many of the principal towns. Recourse was had to another means of procuring muskets, which was, disarming the foreign regiments, the fidelity of all being suspected, with the exception of the Swiss and Poles. On the same day, and in different parts of the empire, the Dutch, the Hanseatics, the Croats, and the Germans, were disarmed, and the cavalry dismounted. This measure procured a supply of some thousand muskets, and some hundred horses. The marine arsenals were afterwards emptied, and still Napoleon's passion for conquest was so strong, that he did not hesitate to send off 50,000 muskets to Italy at the

very moment when he was not sure of having sufficient for the defence of Paris.

Whilst the Emperor was thus endeavouring to reorganize his resources by prodigies of administrative activity, the idea occurred to him of obtaining some more, by a policy which was certainly wise, but adopted too late. He directed General Delort at Frankfort to enter into negotiations with the adverse generals for the surrender of the fortresses on the Vistula and the Oder, on condition of the immediate return into France of the garrisons, with arms and baggage. If this condition were accepted, General Delort was afterwards to make overtures for the more important garrisons of Hambourg, Magdebourg, Wittenbourg, Erfurt, &c., The ratification of such a proposal would have procured the accession of 100,000 first-class soldiers, and would have yielded, it is true, an equal number to the Allies, by terminating the blockade of the fortresses. But whilst this arrangement would have given us back excellent soldiers, our enemy would have gained but very medium ones, and besides, in the state of destitution in which we were, 100,000 men were of more importance to us than 200,000 to the Allies. Unfortunately, this reason, which induced the violation of the capitulation of Dresden, left us little hope of succeeding in a negotiation of this kind.

But a still greater resource remained; it was that which could be furnished by the army of Spain, if it could have been transported from the Pyrenees to the Rhine. In that army, in addition to number, everything was excellent, incomparable; no troops in Europe were equal to the regiments of Marshal Suchet or Marshal Soult. The soldiers of the latter, the remains of armies that had been uniformly unfortunate, were, it is true, disgusted with the service, but the glory of defending the Rhine and under the command of Napoleon himself, would have certainly converted their disgust into ardent zeal. Nor is it venturesome to say, that had the 80,000 men commanded by the Marshals Suchet and Soult, been able to take up a position between the Rhine and Paris, the Allies would never have approached the walls of our capital. In order to place our Spanish army in this position, it would have been necessary to conclude a peace with the Spaniards; but this peace, which in appearance ought to have been so easily affected by restoring to the Spaniards their king and their country, was more difficult, perhaps, than that which we hoped to conclude at Manheim. In fact, it was not sufficient that Napoleon should renounce Spain, in order that Spain should renounce him, or that he should re-cross the Pyrenees, in order to induce her not to cross them in company with the Portuguese and English. The punishment of offences would be slight indeed if merely ceasing to persist in them could avert their consequences.

Napoleon, as we have said, had for about two years past resolved to give up Spain, without explaining his secret reasons, of which, however, there are sufficient traces in our archives to remove any doubts the historian may entertain. Still, it was not possible that a man of his disposition would unconditionally sacrifice a conquest, and

he had flattered himself the preceding year that he would be able to retain the Ebro provinces. This last illusion was at length dissolved, and he had resolved to restore Spain, unconditionally, to Ferdinand VII., provided this prince would sign a treaty of peace and persuade his people to consent to the same. It is easy to imagine what the conditions of peace should be. In the first place, Ferdinand VII. and the princes detained with him at Valençay should be set at liberty; the fortresses and prisoners of war should be delivered up. On the other hand, the Spanish armies were to withdraw into Spain, and require the English to do the same. It would seem that after these mutual concessions, France and Spain could have nothing more to demand of each other. But adverse circumstances perplexed this position, which appeared at first sight so simple. The Spaniards panted for vengeance, and longed to retaliate on French soil the excesses that had been committed on theirs. The English, after having contributed to the deliverance of Spain, were not people likely to take their dismissal at a beck, and repass the Pyrenees at a notification from Cadiz or Madrid. Besides, an engagement existed between England and Spain, that one should not enter into negotiation without the other. In short, the Cortes exercising at this moment the royal authority were in no hurry to lay down their power at the feet of Ferdinand VII., and did not participate in the desire for his return, which the country as well as himself felt. In any case, the Cortes did not wish to restore his sceptre, except on condition that he should swear to observe the constitution of Cadiz. Influenced by these different motives, it might happen that neither the English nor the Spanish representatives would consent to the ratification of a treaty signed at Valençay, for the restoration of Ferdinand, on whom they set little value. Ferdinand himself, once at liberty, might care little about the treaty that had set him free, and say that nothing was due to those who had once proved treacherous, strengthening himself with the reason formerly alleged by Francis I., and never condemned by any juris-consulte, that a promise made during captivity is not binding. The conduct pursued in 1808 towards the royal family of Spain had been such that no person in Europe, not even in France, would have ventured to blame the prisoner of Valençay. Napoleon, the haughty lion, would have appeared under such circumstances, like a fox caught in his own snare.

If, on the contrary, through a natural sentiment of distrust, Napoleon detained Ferdinand VII. until the treaty concluded with him should be carried to Cadiz, and ratified by the regency, it was possible that by the contrivance of the English and the Cortes, this treaty might be rejected and declared void, on the plea that it was concluded in captivity, and that the ratification should be deferred until the return of the king of Spain. Ferdinand VII. would be the longer in prison, but that circumstance would annoy the English quite as little as the liberal Spaniards.

Considering the risk of seeing the treaty ignored either by Ferdinand, or by those who exercised the royal authority in his

absence, the safest course might have been to send the Spanish monarch back to his kingdom. But in sending him back the question might arise, would he keep his word; of his fidelity on this point, his extreme piety might be considered a guarantee, whilst if the treaty were sent without the King, it was certain to be rejected by the English and the Cortes, both parties being most anxious to invade the south of France. M. de Caulaincourt thought it advisable to run the risk of trusting the King. Napoleon, who had no confidence in Ferdinand, and he had his private reasons for entertaining such distrust, wished to take a middle course, and after having concluded a treaty with Ferdinand, to send this treaty into Spain by a trustworthy man, who should endeavour to awaken in the breasts of the old servants of the crown the desire to see the Spanish dynasty re-established. They were to be encouraged still further by a promise that all the Spanish fortresses should be immediately restored. Moreover, the English and Spaniards, as it often happens with allies carrying on a common war, were not on good terms with each other, and it was probable that the Spaniards would not be sorry to be able to say to the English that they had no further need of them, in which case, the latter, deprived of the assistance of the Spanish armies, and having no longer an assured line of retreat across the Pyrenees, dare not remain upon the French frontiers.

It was influenced by these considerations that Napoleon shaped his conduct with regard to Ferdinand VII. He gave orders to M. de Laforest, who had been a long time ambassador at Madrid, to repair under an assumed name to Valençay, to confer in the strictest privacy with the Spanish princes, and to propose to them the following conditions of peace:—The reciprocal evacuation of territory, the return of Ferdinand VII. to Madrid, the liberation of prisoners, the retreat of the English.

Napoleon added to these many private conditions that did him honour, and which were as important to Spain as to us. The first was that Ferdinand VII. should pay to Charles IV. the pension promised by Joseph, and which had been very irregularly paid; the second condition was that he should grant a complete amnesty to those Spaniards who had espoused the cause of France; the third that Spain should retain not only her restored continental territories, but her colonies, and that none of the latter should be ceded to Great Britain. There was nothing in these conditions which Ferdinand either as a son, a king, or a Spaniard, could refuse. But another condition remained, not so easy to propose as the others, but to which Ferdinand, in his anxiety to obtain his liberty, might accede; it was that he should espouse the daughter of Joseph Bonaparte. M. de Laforest had orders to reserve this condition for the last, and to propose the alliance only at the moment when the conference should be drawing to a close. This treaty being concluded and signed, a person confided in alike by the Spanish princes and the French ambassador was selected to carry it to the regency, and these precautions were observed in order that neither the English nor the chiefs of the liberal

party should have time to prevent the ratification of the treaty. This ratification once obtained, Ferdinand, accompanied by his brother, Don Carlos, and his uncle, Don Antonio, his fellow-prisoners at Valençay, should quit France to reascend the throne of Spain.

As soon as M. de Laforest had set out, Napoleon, in order that no time should be lost, sent to Lons-le-Saulnier for the Duke of San Carlos, a person of some consideration, and formerly very intimate with Ferdinand VII. Napoleon received the Duke in the most friendly manner, and in a long conversation, succeeded in bringing him round to his views. He then sent him off to Valençay, in order that he might second the efforts of M. de Laforest, who was doomed to meet with unexpected difficulties. That criminal Spanish business was condemned to punishments both great and small.

The appearance of M. de Laforest at Valençay occasioned great surprise to Ferdinand VII. This prince, a prisoner during six years, with his brother and uncle, had lived in profound ignorance of what was going on in Europe, but through the medium of some French journals that had fallen into his hands, he perceived that the Spanish war was indefinitely prolonged, that, consequently, his subjects were still defending themselves, that neither was Europe cowed since this incessant war was waged against her, and he had sufficient sagacity to perceive that his cause was not entirely lost. It was besides suspected that the parish priest of Valençay, who said mass for him and heard his confession, informed him of all he had an interest in learning, and probably acquainted him with the important events of 1812 and 1813. He might then not have been very much astonished at the communications made by M. de Laforest. But adversity and imprisonment had developed in a high degree the natural characteristics of this prince—distrust and dissimulation. All the powers of his mind, and he was not deficient, he employed in watching those around him, trying to discover if they sought to injure him; he was silent, he did not act, for fear of giving any advantage to the powerful enemy, on whose will he had been dependant during so many years. To dissimulate, to deceive even, seemed to him legitimate defences against the oppression to which he was subjected; and the policy that had conducted him from Madrid to Valençay seemed to justify his conduct. His distrust had reached such a degree, that he was on his guard with his most faithful servants, with those even who were detained in France for his cause, and whom he was always ready to regard as the secret agents of Napoleon. As to the rest, he was not very unhappy. Going to confession, eating and drinking well, walking for exercise, incurring no danger, constituted for him a species of comfort, to which he had become habituated. His mind, devoid of elasticity, had sunk beneath oppression, but in sinking had fallen back upon itself, and when an effort was made to draw him from this reserve, he obstinately resisted, like an animal at once timid and savage, whom the tenderest caresses cannot coax from his den. His brother, Don Carlos, was more lively without being more frank; his uncle was almost stupid.

When M. de Laforest suddenly informed Ferdinand VII. that Napoleon was thinking of restoring his liberty and throne, his first impression was that this proceeding was a cheat, used only as a cover for some hidden perfidy. The motives alleged by M. de Laforest, who wished to avoid the avowal of our misfortunes, and which consisted in saying that Napoleon was desirous of snatching Spain from the English and the revolutionists, were not of a nature to produce the desired effect on Ferdinand, who set himself to think what dark machination could be concealed beneath this unexpected proposition. In his first interview with the French deputy he listened quietly and spoke little, contenting himself with saying that, deprived of all communication with the external world, he knew nothing, and was consequently unable to form an opinion on any subjects; that he was in the powerful hands of Napoleon, that he was contented, that he did not seek to quit his retreat, and that he would never cease to be grateful for the manner in which he had been treated. Behold the effect that tyranny produces on those submitted to its influence! Napoleon now found himself in the position of not being able to induce Ferdinand VII. to accept either his liberty or his throne, at the very moment when it was the Emperor's interest to restore him both the one and the other. M. de Laforest saw clearly that it would be necessary to leave this distrustful and timid nature time for repose and reflection. He left, intending to see him next day.

Ferdinand VII., after having conferred with his brother and uncle, and reflected within himself, clearly understood that Napoleon must be in great straits, and that the offer of restoring his throne was sincere. But before listening to a proposition that appeared so attractive, he wished to know whether it might not be a snare, and whether his enemies were not endeavouring to betray him into dangerous or dishonourable engagements. Besides being at Valençay void of all authority over Spain, he had reason to fear, and this fear was well founded, that he might not be able to keep the engagements to which he would be obliged to subscribe. He resolved then, by acting more openly, to assume a more regal attitude, but to be still extremely circumspect.

In revisiting Ferdinand next day, M. de Laforest found him much more composed in his demeanour, taking his place between his uncle and his brother as their hereditary master, and speaking with the gravity and dignity of a king. He did not conceal that he now began to regard the proposition made to him, as serious, and that he divined the real cause, but he declared himself unable to fix on any line of conduct, deprived as he was of counsellors, and affirmed above all, that he was without authority, for he did not know whether a treaty signed at Valençay would be accepted and executed at Madrid. However, it was easy to perceive that he would not, for trifles, break off negotiations, or re-close his prison gates, now ready to open. He was evidently very anxious. M. de Laforest having offered him the services of his old preceptor, the Canon Escoïquis, then under *surveillance* at Bruges, his private secretary, Macanaz, who was under

surveillance at Paris, the illustrious Palafox, a prisoner at Vincennes, and lastly, the Duke of San Carlos, immured at Lons-la-Saulnier, he seemed to have no confidence in any of these men. It would seem that naming them at this moment was sufficient to blacken them in his opinion.

The conferences continued, and the evident sincerity of M. de Laforest, the striking simplicity of the conditions he proposed, produced in the end an effect on the mind of Ferdinand, above all, the desire of liberty exercised a powerful influence, he acquired gradually more confidence, and began to reason with great good sense on the proposals he had received. At length, the arrival of M. de San Carlos, who had seen and heard Napoleon, and could appreciate the sincerity of his intentions, swept away the last shadows of doubt that overclouded the prisoner of Valençay. Even M. de San Carlos was for a moment received with distrust by his master, but he soon made himself heard, and they then entered seriously on business. Ferdinand VII. had nothing to object to the proposition of returning into Spain, of re-ascending the throne, of paying a pension to his father, of keeping intact the continental and colonial territories of his ancient monarchy, even of pardoning the *afrancesadoes*. A marriage with the daughter of Joseph was less agreeable, but having so often solicited the hand of a Bonaparte princess it would be too late to affect disdain; but, in fact, there was no marriage he would not have contracted as a means to recover his liberty and throne. The difficulty was not then in the proposed union, it came from another quarter. To his dazzled eyes were presented an infinite number of things, very desirable and very much desired, and all were promised to him on condition that the Cortes or the regency should ratify the treaty he was to sign; thus what he ardently desired was made to depend on a will that was not his. He said frankly and showed clearly that what he commanded from a distance might not be executed. He spoke in an angry tone of the limits that certain men, whom he styled factious, had wished to impose on his royal authority, and did not conceal that, next to the French, he most hated the Spanish liberals. He showed that the surest way to obtain what they wished from Spain was to send him to Madrid, where nobody could have a pretext in his presence to refuse him obedience; but whilst he was detained at Valençay his subjects might allege his captivity as a pretext for affecting not to believe the commands issued in his name. More than once he swore by all that was most sacred that he would keep his word as a king, as an honest man, and as a good Christian. And soon growing very warm, he flung aside all dissimulation, and exhibited a passionate desire to be free, to leave France, to reign, all which was very natural; and endeavoured with all his might to persuade them to adopt his proposition as the only one that offered a chance of success.

However, the instructions of Napoleon being positive, all were obliged to submit, and a treaty was concluded by which Ferdinand VII. was to return to Spain, as soon as the regency should have

ratified the treaty, and got it put into operation. The conditions were what we have already stated: the colonial and continental integrity of Spain, the restitution of the Spanish fortresses, the withdrawal of the French garrisons, the retreat of the Spanish and English armies beyond the Pyrenees, a general amnesty, and a pension to Charles IV. The marriage with the daughter of Joseph was not formally stipulated. Ferdinand declared that he would not contract any other, if he were free, but, he added, it was a subject that could only be discussed at Madrid.

The above mentioned conditions having been signed on the 11th of December, the next question was who would carry the treaty to Madrid in the name of Ferdinand. The envoy was already present, it was the Duke of San Carlos himself. It was agreed that this personage should repair in the greatest haste and most profound incognito to the army at Catalonia, in order to lull the vigilance of the English, which would be excited if he passed through the head-quarters of Lord Wellington. He was to endeavour to reach Madrid, and press thence to Cadiz, if the regency was still sitting there, present the treaty, and get it ratified. The Duke of San Carlos was to persuade the subjects of Ferdinand VII., who were ruling in his stead, to think above all things of setting him at liberty, and to sacrifice everything for that object. He was at the same time expressly commissioned not to adhere to the constitution, or if obliged to do so, only with such reservations as would permit the breaking of any engagements he might be induced to make with rebels.

These things being arranged, the Duke of San Carlos set out from Valençay the 13th December, bearing with him the good wishes of the Spanish princes, who, having laid aside all dissimulation, testified an almost infantine impatience to be set at liberty. Satisfied as to the intentions of Napoleon, they consented to see the faithful followers, whom they at first appeared to distrust, the Canon Escoïquiz, the secretary Macanaz, and the defender of Saragossa, Palafox. Flattering themselves that this latter would have more influence with the Spaniards than the Duke of San Carlos, for he ought to be reverently listened to, if they had not wholly lost the faculty of memory, he was despatched by a different route with a copy of the treaty, and instructions to get it accepted.

Nobody will be surprised to learn that Napoleon had conducted this negotiation without the cognizance of his brother Joseph, who was almost as much a prisoner at Morfontaine as Ferdinand VII. was at Valençay. Joseph, as we must remember, had received orders after the battle of Vittoria, to shut himself up at Morfontaine, not to admit anyone, and not to go out, under pain of the severest penalties. Napoleon so strongly distrusted the excitable blood of the Bonapartes, even in the meekest of his brothers, that he did not wish to allow Joseph to go to Paris, lest he might throw difficulties in the way of the regency. He remembered the public commotions excited during royal minorities by the uncles and cousins of kings; he had always before his mind the picture of Marie Louise defending her son

against her brothers-in-law. Notwithstanding these orders, Joseph had gone secretly to Paris, but solely for amusement, not for political intrigues. The Duke of Rovigo, interpreting to the letter the Imperial orders, had signified to Joseph that if he renewed his clandestine courses he would be obliged to interfere, upon which Joseph, already very much irritated by all he had been made to suffer, appeared very indignant.

Napoleon had not seen his brother since his return to Paris. He did not, however, wish that the negotiation with Ferdinand VII., which was nearly terminated, should be known to all Europe before Joseph was made acquainted with it. He commissioned M. Rœderer, his usual agent to go to Morfontaine, and inform Joseph of all that had been done, and endeavour to persuade him to resume quietly the rank of French prince, with a handsome revenue, and become a member of the regency, serving to the best of his ability, France, his last and only asylum. Joseph, on receiving this intelligence, complained bitterly of the treatment he had received, and spoke of his regal rights in a manner that would have excited a smile from a less satirical brother than Napoleon. He admitted that he had committed military errors, but not so great as was said; he declared himself ready to resign the throne of Spain, but in virtue of a treaty and on condition of receiving a territorial indemnity at Naples or Turin; nor did he seem inclined to resume the rank of French prince after having worn one of the greatest crowns in the world. His pretensions provoked an outburst of bitter sarcasms from Napoleon, some unjust and even cruel, the others well-founded, but, alas! uttered too late.

"Joseph has committed military errors," cried Napoleon, after hearing M. Rœderer's account of the interview, "but he does not think of them. For my part, I commit faults, I am a soldier, I may sometimes err in the exercise of my profession, but he commit faults! He is wrong to accuse himself, he has never committed any. It is true he has lost Spain, and he will never recover it. It is a decided fact, as decided as anything ever could be. Let him consult the least of my generals and he will see if it is possible to claim a single village beyond the Pyrenees. A treaty! Conditions! And with whom? In whose name! Even if I wished to make one with Spain, I would not be listened to. The first of all conditions for obtaining peace with Europe, a condition without which, it would be impossible for two negotiators to succeed, is the unconditional restitution of Spain to the Bourbons, happy if I can at this price get rid of the English, and bring up the armies of Spain to the Rhine. As to indemnifications in Italy, where shall I find them? Can I deprive Murat of his kingdom? It is doubtful if I shall be able to recall him to the duty he owes France and me. How should I be obeyed if I asked him to descend from his throne for the benefit of Joseph? As to the Roman states, I shall be forced to restore them to the Pope, and I am determined to do so. As to Tuscany, which is Eliza's; as to Piedmont, which belongs to France; as to Lombardy, where Eugene has so much difficulty in maintaining his ground, do I know how much of

these I shall be left? Do I even know if any part of them will be left me? To keep France with her natural limits, I should need a series of victories; to obtain anything beyond the Alps, I should gain still more. And if I were left a kingdom in Italy, could I for Joseph's sake take it from Eugene, that brave, devoted son, who has passed his entire life under fire for me and for France, and who has never given me a single cause of complaint. Where then does Joseph expect me to find an indemnity for him? There is but one part left for him to play; it is to be a faithful brother, a solid support to my wife and my son if I am absent, more solid still if I die, and help to save the throne of France, the sole resource that henceforth remains to the Bonapartes. He shall be a prince of France, treated as my brother, as the uncle of my son, sharing consequently in all the Imperial honours. If he act thus, he shall enjoy my favor, and the public esteem; he shall still occupy a distinguished position, and contribute to our common welfare. If he pursue an opposite course, and he is very capable of doing so, for he can neither endure labour nor idleness; if he cause any commotion during my life, he shall be arrested, and shall finish his reign at Vincennes; if he raise disturbance after my death, let the Almighty judge him. But probably he will contribute to overthrow the throne of my son, the only throne beneath whose shadow he can find dignity, affluence, or a trace of the grandeur he seeks."

These sagacious but coarse expressions carried backwards and forwards between Paris and Morfontaine, did not convince Joseph. He was agitated, ill, and suffering from many annoyances at the time; there were the severe sarcasms of Napoleon, a lost throne, beggared children, and his sole future prospect, obedience to the orders of an imperious brother, not tyrannical perhaps, but certainly harsh. In this depressed state of mind, he refused to take any part in what was going on at Valençay, and remained at Morfontaine, where Napoleon left him in his loneliness, saying that both he and the Spaniards could very well do without the signature of King Joseph, in restoring Ferdinand VII. the throne of Spain.

This period, when so many of the Bonaparte family were losing their thrones, was one of violent domestic agitation, which, added to the rest of Napoleon's cares, tended to embitter his existence. Jerome, who had retired successively to Coblentz, to Cologne, and to Aix-la-Chapelle, was staying at the last-named place, sad and miserable. He was anxious to return to Paris lest Napoleon might forget him in arranging the approaching peace, and Napoleon, who had more affection for Jerome than for any of his brothers, refused to yield to his wishes, because it was painful to him to have his dethroned brothers constantly before his eyes, particularly as their presence revealed in the most glaring colours the advancing ruin of the French empire. But, though he refused Jerome permission to come to Paris, he had much more serious cause of complaint against Murat.

The unfortunate Murat had returned to Naples with an almost broken heart and a distracted mind. Of all the princes doomed at

this time to behold the dissolution of their ephemeral royalty, Murat was the most inconsolable. It seemed as if this soldier, born so remote from the throne, and to whom the possession of well-earned military glory ought to have been sufficient compensation for the loss of a crown, it seemed as if he could not now enjoy existence unless as a king. After the events of the last campaign, he could scarcely believe that Napoleon, even if he still held France, could extend his power beyond the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, or that beyond these limits he could either afford support or inflict punishment. If then he remained faithful to Napoleon he incurred the risk of not being supported, whilst there was very little chance of being punished if he deserted him. Undoubtedly by joining Prince Eugene, and bringing 30,000 well-disciplined Neapolitans to the support of the 40,000 French that were defending the Adige, there was a possibility of his disputing Italy with the Austrians, but only a possibility, not a certainty. If the two lieutenants of Napoleon were conquered they would be quickly dethroned; if they conquered, in what position would they be? And Murat especially, what would be his fate? Sacrificed to Prince Eugene, of whom he was jealous, banished to the remotest part of the peninsula, limited to the kingdom of Naples, which would be very little worth without Sicily, and he had no certainty of being able to keep even that, for if Europe offered advantageous terms of peace, which involved the sacrifice of Murat, Napoleon would not be so good a relative and so bad a Frenchman as to refuse the sacrifice. Besides, though Murat was not endowed with a solid understanding, he was possessed of a certain acuteness, and he had often perceived that though Napoleon appreciated his valour, he set no value on his intellectual capacity, and this pointed contempt offended him mortally. Such were the considerations that had agitated, tormented the mind of Murat during his journey from Erfurt to Naples. Whilst he saw so much danger in remaining faithful to Napoleon, and so little in abandoning him, gloomy thoughts contributed to increase his agitation. He had not ceased to keep up a correspondence with the allied powers, even whilst he was in the camp of Napoleon, and performing feats of valour in his service. At the moment that he quitted Naples for Dresden he had with him agents of Lord William Bentinck, the English governor of Sicily; these he abruptly dismissed when he set out for the French army; a proceeding that surprised and offended Lord William. But he did not act in the same manner towards Austria, and retained at that court, Prince Cariati, as Neapolitan minister, and kept at Naples the Count de Mire as Austrian minister. M. de Metternich, profiting by this double means of communication, had incessantly sought to shake the fidelity of the Neapolitan court, for he well knew that if Murat instead of coming to the support of Prince Eugene's right, would attack that prince in the rear, Italy would be immediately lost to France and gained by Austria. Not content with trying to practise on the mind of the king, M. de Metternich had opened secret negotiations with the queen, whom he had formerly known at Paris, when

he was ambassador there, and had tried to make her forget her duty as a sister by exciting her feelings as a mother and a wife. Not only had he promised to leave Murat the throne of Naples, without Sicily, which the English made a point of giving to the Bourbons, but he had hinted the possibility of procuring him one of the finest kingdoms of Italy. Prince Eugene and the Princess Eliza being expelled with the French, and Piedmont reconquered, it was possible, still reserving a large portion for Austria, and re-establishing the Pope at Rome, to constitute a kingdom of Central Italy, whose ruler, according to Metternich, would be the chief prince in Italy, and a second-rank European monarch. These were the arguments M. de Metternich had used, and each day with increasing success.

In short, on one hand Murat encountered the greatest perils with Napoleon without the certainty of being supported by him in case of success; and on the other hand, the Allies offered him, besides the certainty of remaining King of Naples, the hope of becoming, in some sort, King of Italy, and this prospect captivated the unfortunate Murat, after having seduced the queen herself. The latter had been in the beginning the faithful representative of the French party at Naples, had resisted all the Austrian suggestions, and had endeavoured to win Murat back to Napoleon. But soon the danger increasing, she was overruled by the desire of preserving the crown for her children, she listened to the insinuations of M. de Metternich, and finished by becoming his chief agent with Murat. Wishing at the same time to give her conduct a colour in the eyes of the French minister, she pretended to have no longer any influence at the court, nor with the king, and to be obliged, as an obedient wife and devoted mother, to follow the policy of the Neapolitan cabinet. Murat having returned to his kingdom, found his entire court combined to urge him into those devious ways that terminated, not in a throne, but in an ignominious death, and left upon his memory an indelible stain. This prince, born with good and generous sentiments, endowed with some intelligence and heroic bravery, had not sufficient judgment to discern that if with France he ran the double danger of being abandoned by victory and by Napoleon, there was a certainty that the Allies after having made use of, and caressed him whilst they had need of him, would soon sacrifice him to the old Italian dynasties, and he should find himself thus at once dethroned and dishonoured. Not endowed with sufficient clear-sightedness to take in so distant a prospect, not possessed of principles lofty enough to prefer honour to interest, he remained some days agitated by a thousand conflicting sentiments, and finished by a deplorable defection.

Scarcely had he returned to his kingdom, than finding the queen come over to his opinion, he had resumed negotiations with the Austrian legation, and the only question he now raised was as to the extent of the advantages he could obtain. Passing suddenly, with the characteristic mobility of his nature, from the depths of despair to a delirium of ambition, he abandoned himself to the wildest

fancies, and flattered himself with soon becoming king and hero of the Italian nation. In traversing Italy, he had observed one almost general disposition amongst the people; that was a desire to become independent of both France and Austria. Undoubtedly, the nobles, the priests, even the people desired the return of Austria, because that for the one, it would be a restoration to their former position, and for the others, an exemption from conscription. The middle class, on the contrary, fascinated with the idea of independence, said it was well to escape from France, but not well to fall back into the hands of Austria. They did not see any reason for passing from one to the other, and becoming the plaything, the victim of foreign masters. Austria ought to be glad that Italy was no longer in the hands of France, and France that she was no longer in the hands of Austria: the independence of the peninsula ought to be, said the bourgeoisie, a desirable object for both powers, and even more advantageous than the direct possession would be to either, for Italy, subdued by one of the two powers, would be a dangerous instrument of attack against the other, whilst for the dominant monarch, she would be only a rebellious subject, always ready to become a furious enemy.

These ideas had taken possession of the minds of the most active and enlightened among the bourgeoisie. Murat, located in the most remote part of the peninsula, at equal distance between the French and Austrians, having an interest in securing himself without betraying Napoleon, capable, with his talents and military glory, of creating an Italian army, Murat had appeared to the independents every way qualified to become their hero. He could in fact say to the Austrians: "I am not France;" to the French: "I am not Austria;" he could say to all: "Do not provoke me, accept me as the least hostile—or rather as the most advantageous—means of securing the end you have in view, if you understand your true interests." The partisans of independence had already surrounded Murat, and lavished upon him promises and flattery, and Murat, in the excitement of his mind, thinking of many projects, and ready to undertake all, had listened favourably to the independents, and accepted them as his agents, so that at Florence, at Boulogne, and Rome, they celebrated his praises as the saviour of Italy, and announced, in prose and verse, his heaven-sent mission.

These ideas were not analagous to the general mode of thinking adopted by the Austrians; however, they did not absolutely discourage them, but allowed Murat, under the pretext of indemnifying him for Sicily, to hope for a large accession of territory in Central Italy. Murat, who in the wild flights of his ambition, put no bounds to his desires, began to fancy that perhaps Napoleon would afford him greater encouragement touching his new Italian kingdom than he had received from the Austrians. Having become, under the excitement of the time, more versatile than ever, he no longer perceived the danger he formerly dreaded from the French alliance, because he fancied it would afford him a greater chance of increased power, flattering himself that all the Italians would rise *en masse* if he promised

them independence and unity. He said within himself that if Napoleon would only allow him to proclaim this independence and this unity, and permit him to become the representative of the combined conditions, he would bring to Prince Eugene's assistance, not alone the Neapolitan army, but in addition, 100,000 Italians, who would all rise at his voice, and that thus he would secure his own safety, in increasing his power, in exalting his position, and, in addition to all these advantages, he would secure another, for, by being the ally of France, he could still keep in his service a large number of French officers, who constituted the principal strength of his army.

Such was the confused succession of ideas that whirled through the brain of this unhappy prince. First, in extreme dejection, he conceived the dreadful idea of abandoning France, and forming an alliance with Austria; from this idea he passed on to the ambitious hope of becoming saviour and king of Italy; and changing his views as his ambitious fancies became stronger, he in spirit abandoned Austria for France, hoping thereby to promote his projected aggrandisement. He formed the wildest schemes, and there was no defection, no alliance, to which he was not ready to give assent, according to the momentary aspect of his plans. Terrible torment that drives downward from ambition to despair; terrible torment that at Paris convulsed the mighty soul of Napoleon with tempests vast as his own genius, whilst at Naples it shook with racking fancies a kind but feeble-minded creature, endowed with no other force than the physical courage of a soldier. It was an afflicting variety of the malady that Napoleon had communicated to nearly all his followers. In fact, after having raised himself to the throne, he had made his brothers and lieutenants kings, princes, and grand-dukes, or flattered them with the hope of becoming so; witness Joseph, Louis, Jerome, Murat, Bernadotte, Berthier, and so many others, who had nearly reached the royal dignity; and if at this moment they were inclined to betray, or at least to serve him laxly, whom could he blame but himself, who had eradicated from their souls the noble love of national glory, and substituted in its stead, the mean passion of personal ambition.

At this very time, a personage arrived at Naples whose presence was calculated to increase the perturbation of Murat; it was the Duke of Otranto, M. Fouché, whom Napoleon had sent thither in all haste. Napoleon, in parting from Murat at Erfurt, had received from him evidences of affection that had touched, but not deceived him. When it was a question of penetrating the depths of the human mind, Napoleon possessed a kind of diabolical perspicacity that nothing could escape. He had suspected as he saw danger increasing, that Murat, that his sister even, would need to be strengthened in their duty, and that powerful influences should be opposed to the suggestions of the Allies. He had therefore thought of sending to them M. Fouché, who, since the entry of the Austrians into Illyria, had ceased to be a king, and was only a pro-consul without territory, remaining unemployed at Verona. He had judged M. Fouché the most proper confidant for Murat, considering the intrigues they had

both plotted in 1809. At that time, Murat and the Duke of Otranto, fearing the result of the Austrian war, had endeavoured to come to an understanding as to what was to become of the supreme power in France, in case Napoleon should be killed. Under such circumstances, the mutual confidence between Murat and M. Fouché must have been very great, and it was presumable that the same confidence might be re-established under circumstances not less critical. M. Fouché had therefore received orders to repair to Naples, and he arrived there at the very moment when Murat was most exposed to the influence of Austrian intrigues.

Although M. Fouché might receive the confession of a treason without being shocked, and though he was fully capable of understanding all that passed in the King of Naples' mind, still the latter seemed rather annoyed than comforted by his presence. He complained bitterly of Napoleon, spoke at great length of the services he had rendered him, and the bad treatment he had received on several occasions, especially after the retreat from Russia. He spoke too of Napoleon's disposition to sacrifice him if the peace of France with Europe depended on the sacrifice. He complained in a word, as a man complains who seeks an excuse for quarrelling, nor did he open his mind fully to M. Fouché, whom he judged must be, in the present case, necessarily attached to the French cause. Murat did not affect to conceal that it depended on Napoleon to win him back by treating him better, as if, after having bestowed on him his sister and a throne, Napoleon was still his debtor. In short, M. Fouché did not acquire much influence at the court of Naples, for the voice of duty could not sound effectively from his lips, and Murat was not in a state of mind to listen to political reasons. M. Fouché represented to him, with profound sagacity, that having risen with and by Napoleon, he was doomed to prosper, or to perish with him, but Murat, offended at the observation, remarked very flatly that what was true for a revolutionary regicide, such as M. Fouché, would not be true for him, a victorious soldier, indebted for every thing to his sword. As to the rest, however unprofitable the presence of M. Fouché might be in other respects, it contributed at least to the resolution Murat had taken of trying to come to an understanding with Napoleon, and becoming, with his concurrence, the king of independent and united Italy. If he succeeded in winning the attention of Napoleon, his fondest wishes were realized; if he failed, he had an excuse for quarrelling. In consequence of these reflections, he proposed that Napoleon should make two divisions of Italy, giving Prince Eugene all that was on the left bank of the Po, and giving Murat all that was on the right, that is to say, three-fourths of the Peninsula; he was also to permit him to proclaim Italian independence, and on these conditions, Murat promised to arrive on the Adige, not with 30,000 Neapolitans, but with 100,000 Italians. He begged Napoleon to reply immediately, for circumstances were pressing, and there was not an instant to lose if he wished to profit of the times.

Napoleon was not astonished, for he was prepared for any amount of ingratitude from the men whom he had raised to the height of worldly grandeur, but he was deeply indignant at the proposition of Murat, and justly so. Had Murat been a great politician capable of conceiving a vast moral idea such as the regeneration of Italy, his proposal might have been attributed to the warmth of a generous enthusiasm. But it was evidently only a pretext to colour over a mad ambition, or perhaps disguise an imminent treason. To demand from Napoleon as the price of his services, the patrimony of the church which was no longer in his gift; Tuscany, the appanage of his sister; Piedmont, a French province; the Legations, which were a part of Prince Eugene's territory; to make these demands, was to ask him to strip either France or his family, or to deprive himself of these valuable possessions, which in the approaching negotiations might serve to conclude an advantageous peace, by furnishing compensations for the legitimate conquests of France, such as the Alps and the Rhine. This proposal was in some sort, putting a dagger to the throat of a half-ruined brother-in-law, by trying to deprive him of territory that he ought either leave to his family, or sacrifice for his own preservation. Besides, Europe would never have consented to such a partition of Italy; and what Murat ought to have done, if he had had good sense, would be to join Prince Eugene, to defend Italy courageously with him; to conserve to France the pledges of peace, and to secure thus for each a throne. which could only be durable as long as the Imperial dynasty ruled from the Alps to the Rhine. The example of Prince Eugene, who gave so noble an example of fidelity when his father-in-law furnished him a means and an excuse for joining the Allies, ought to have inspired Murat with more good sense and gratitude. Napoleon felt the ill-conduct of his brother-in-law with intense bitterness. To punish this ungrateful relative appeared to him at this moment one of the sweetest fruits of victory, should he be again victorious. M. de la Besnardière, manager of foreign affairs in the absence of M. de Caulaincourt, who had set out for the future Congress at Manheim, tried vainly to calm the Emperor, and to persuade him that however blameable Murat might be, it was necessary under existing circumstances to temporize. Napoleon burst into a passion, and would not listen to anything. "This man" cried he "is at once criminal and mad; he deprives me of Italy, perhaps of more, but at the same time he destroys himself. You will see that he will be one day obliged to beg from me a home and bread (strange and terrible prophecy), but I shall live long enough I hope, to punish his monstrous ingratitude."

Spite of the entreaties of M. de Besnardière, Napoleon would not temporize; the only concession he would make was to pass over the proposals of Murat in silence. To promise any part of what was asked, and thus consent to strip his family or France for the advantage of a madman, or to thunder forth against him the moral condemnation that he deserved, would have been a weakness or an imprudence, and Napoleon took the resolution of being silent, He allowed all the

Imperial family to write to Murat to point out to him his folly and his ingratitude, and the Emperor wrote to Prince Eugene, recommending him to be on his guard; he sent advices to his sister in Tuscany and to General Miollis at Rome, to close all the garrisons against the Neapolitan troops, if Murat, as there was reason to believe, should invade Italy, under pretext of sustaining the French cause. Murat, in fact, had not yet thrown away the mask, and still declared his intention of coming to the assistance of the French army on the Adige.

Such were the numerous occupations and the severe mental conflicts in which Napoleon passed the end of November and the beginning of December. As to the rest, if from time to time he roared like a lion that receives from afar the arrows of the hunters, held aloof by fear, he exhibited neither his anxiety nor his despair. He still flattered himself that he had four months to prepare, and he hoped in these four months to be able to assemble 300,000 men between Paris and the Rhine, to join to these the entire or part of the old bands of Spain, and with these combined forces to overwhelm the coalition, or crush them in his fall. Alternately animated by hope or meditating vengeance, he was seen active, animated, with flashing eye, walking rapidly to and fro in the presence of his anxious family, of his sorrowful ministers, and his weeping wife. Then he would stop, take his son in his arms, cover him with caresses, restore him to the Empress, and, as if he had found fresh strength in the sentiment of paternity, redouble his pace, uttering such phrases as——"Wait, wait, you shall soon see that my soldiers and I have not forgotten our trade. We have been conquered between the Elbe and the Rhine—conquered by being betrayed—but there will be no traitors between the Rhine and Paris, and you shall again behold the soldiers and the General of Italy. Those who will have dared to profane our frontier shall soon repent of having put a foot on French soil."

Still there was another means left, that of negotiation, and Napoleon was at length content to treat, with the natural limits of France as a basis and the conditions we have already mentioned. Unfortunately, the moment when the Allies were disposed to accord the natural limits of France had passed like a flash of lightning, in the same manner as the fortunate moment had slipped by at Prague, when France might have preserved all her glory of 1810. The equivocal reply to the propositions of M. de Metternich having drawn from him a formal demand as to the acceptation or rejection of the bases of Frankfort, the reply to this demand not being forwarded until the 2nd of December, and not received until the 5th, a month was thus lost, and in this month everything had changed. The Allies had attained a full knowledge of their strength, their transient fit of moderation had passed, and was replaced by all the vehemence of excited passion. From every quarter of Europe, the spirit of a counter-revolution was rising with tempest-like fury.

M. de Metternich, supported by the opinion of the military chiefs, who were weary of the long war, and apprehensive of the risks to which they would be exposed at the other side of the Rhine, had overcome the

pride of Alexander, the rage of the Prussians, the obstinacy of the English, and had induced the Allies assembled at Frankfort to accede to the propositions, of which M. de Saint Aignan had been the bearer to Paris. But the propositions had scarcely been despatched by the sovereigns and diplomatists than there arose a general expression of disapprobation. The suite of Alexander, composed of eminent Germans; the staff of Blucher, consisting of clubbists of the Tugend-Bund; the English representatives, in short, attached to head-quarters and holding various appointments: all would have preferred any other to the course that had been adopted, and cried out for an exterminating war against France and against Napoleon; against France, to reduce her to the limits of 1790—and against Napoleon, to dethrone him and bring back the Bourbons, not alone for the advantage of these princes, but as a tribute to the principle they represented.

To accord Napoleon a respite, of which he would profit to strengthen his army, and afterwards re-establish his domination, seemed to them a most impolitic course. To leave still existing in Italy, in Germany, and other places, numerous establishments founded by Napoleon—to continue in power, princes, either parvenus like himself, or members of old dynasties, who had become his accomplices, —seemed a weakness, a want of foresight, in short, a renunciation of victory at the very moment when it might have been rendered most brilliant and complete. According to these politicians, neither Prince Eugene nor Murat ought to be allowed to remain in Italy, spite of the services that were expected from the latter—nor any member of the Bonaparte family. The Bourbons ought to be re-established at Naples, the Pope at Rome, the Austrian archdukes at Florence and Modena, the house of Savoy at Turin, the Austrians at Milan and even at Venice. In Germany, not only ought the Confederation of the Rhine, that detestable work of Napoleon's, to be destroyed, but his allies in Bavaria and Wurtemberg ought to be punished, and dispossessed without compensation, of all they had acquired through France. There were some even who deserved to be punished in an exemplary manner, and amongst them was the King of Saxony, who ought to be dethroned, and replaced by the Duke of Saxe-Weimar; doing thus exactly the reverse of what had been done by Charles V. The King of Denmark deserved no better treatment, because he had persevered in opposing the designs of the coalition by refusing Norway to Bernadotte. As to the King of Westphalia, Jerome Bonaparte, his fall was already accomplished, and about that there was no more to be said. The Allies ought not to remain on the right bank, they ought to cross over to the left, and seize the ancient ecclesiastical electorates, Treves, Mayence, Cologne, in short, the Austrian Low Countries, independently of Holland, which nobody could think of leaving to France. With these vast territories re-conquered on both banks of the Rhine, a kingdom might be formed for Prussia, so as to render her more powerful than she had been under the great Frederick; states should be re-constituted for the princes deposed by Napoleon, such as the Princes of Hesse, Orange, Brunswick, Hanover; these

friends should be loaded with goods, and with them should be formed a Germanic Confederation stronger than the ancient, more firmly united against France, headed not by the Emperor of Austria, who was considered too moderate to be made Emperor of Germany, but by a Diet that should keep alive the strongest and most anti-French feeling that could be enkindled. Such were the views of the most ardent spirits, whether amongst the allied chiefs, or amongst the secondary agents that surrounded the numerous and ambulatory court of the allied monarchs

The English, especially, having become more moderate under the influence of parliament that did not cease to reproach the ministers with their blind hatred against France, and besides, being represented at Frankfort by one of the sagest spirits, Lord Aberdeen, the English would have rejected so many projected subversions, if, in the number, there did not happen to be one that coincided with their own views, which was depriving France of the Low Countries, that is to say of Antwerp and Flushing. Still they scarcely dared hope for such a result, and restrained their pretensions within the limits of their hopes. It was strange that the Prussians, entertaining within their own hearts all the sentiments of the French revolution, had become, through hatred of the French, the most zealous promoters of the European counter-revolution. Loving liberty to a degree that alarmed their rulers, they wished, through a spirit of vengeance, to eradicate every trace of what the French revolution had effected in Europe. They were not content with winning over their own king, they enticed the Emperor Alexander, by flattery, calling him the king of kings, the supreme chief of the coalition, by attributing to him the great resolves of the war, by promising to conduct him to Paris; all of which excited the vanity of this prince to a delirious height. Alexander, complaisant by nature and by calculation, adding to his natural amiability a continual care to flatter the passions of all, cajoled the Prussians, whose courage and patriotism he did not cease to praise, in order to have them on his side against the Austrians, of whom he was jealous; he flattered the Austrians, by insinuating that the safety of Europe was secured at Prague; nor did he neglect the English, whom he styled models of perseverance, the first authors of the resistance that had been offered to Napoleon, the first conquerors of this conqueror, once believed invincible. Speaking so, whilst at Frankfort, he affected to support the more moderate in their opinions, he privately encouraged the most violent, and allowed them to give free vent to their feelings, in order to attach them more closely to himself. By these means he had succeeded in keeping together the coalition, which was threatened with disintegration, and acquired amongst the Allies a preponderating influence. There was then with Alexander, Count de Stein, a celebrated Prussian, who found an asylum at the court of Russia from the anger of Napoleon. He possessed considerable influence both with Alexander and the Allies. He had been placed at the head of a committee for the direction of German affairs, and administered for the profit of the allied armies, the territories re-

conquered from France, and whose restitution to the former possessors was not accomplished or even decided. These territories were those of Saxony, Hesse, Westphalia, Brunswick, Hanover, Berg, Erfurt, &c. As to the confederates of the Rhine, those allies that had betrayed us, this committee, not taking their defection into account, had taxed them in men and money double the amount they had formerly furnished to France. Hanover, Saxony, Hesse, Cassel, Berg, Wurtemberg, Baden, Bavaria, had been obliged to furnish a contingent of 145,000 men, and a subsidy of 84 million florins, the latter of which had been sent to Prussia, Russia, and Austria, in bonds bearing interest. The committee of German affairs was thus a kind of revolutionary committee, acting in the name of the public safety, and putting no bounds to its desires. Under pretext of giving up the direction of their affairs to the Germans, to whom it was due, Alexander abandoned them to themselves, on condition that they should side with him in case of need.

An extraordinary personage, a Corsican, a stranger by temperament, as well as through superiority of mind to all passions, excepting one, which was hatred, the celebrated Count Pozzo di Borgo, had taken refuge with Alexander, over whom he gradually assumed a marked ascendancy. And who was the object of this hatred which concentrated all the energies of his mind? will naturally be asked. It was that extraordinary man, like himself, a native of Corsica, and whose glory in dazzling the world had agonized the heart of Count Pozzo di Borgo. It certainly argued a rare degree of self-conceit to be jealous of such a genius as Napoleon, for it is only the great Frederic, Cæsar, Hannibal, or Alexander, if their hearts still feel the throbs of mortal emotion, who could have any pretension to be jealous of Napoleon. But how could an obscure individual, hitherto unknown, having never distinguished himself either in the field or at the bar, having been mixed up only in the insignificant squabbles of his native island, how could he possibly conceive a jealousy of the conqueror of Rivoli, of Egypt, and Austerlitz? Still, it was so, for human passions spring up without waiting the permission of either God or man; they are enkindled like those fires that ravage cities and plains, and whose origin is unknown. When a man of genius leaves the country of his birth, he leaves behind either fondly devoted friends, or enemies intensely jealous of his fame. The Count Pozzo was of the latter number with regard to Napoleon, but it must be admitted that on this occasion, he who felt was not unworthy of him who inspired the jealousy. In fact, Heaven had accorded to Count Pozzo a genius as admirable as that of war, of eloquence, or the fine arts; he was endowed with the genius of politics, that is to say, he was gifted with that sagacity which traces human events to their causes, unravels their complications, and foresees their consequence; which discovers the best mode of avoidance or interference; a rare gift, which great minds exercise for the benefit of their country, and little ones for their personal advantage; an endowment that loses in greatness what it gains in egotism, but which must rank amongst the highest intel-

lectual gifts, and which never allows its possessor to remain unknown, idle, or useless. Count Pozzo was, unfortunately for us, a proof of the truth of these assertions, for this man, who up to that period had enjoyed neither renown nor influence, a man who might be almost said to have no country, he it was who contributed in an extraordinary manner to the ruin of Napoleon, and consequently to ours.

He had traversed many countries for the sole purpose of injuring the man he hated; he had gone first to England, then to Austria, then to Russia and Sweden, always quitting the courts that entertained a friendly feeling towards France, to repair to those that were inimical to her, and returning to the former when they had suspended relations with us, but still breathing forth wherever he went, the intensity of the passion by which he was inspired. He undertook every kind of mission. Sometimes he was sent to London to obtain necessary funds, at another time he was despatched to Bernadotte, whom he despised and ruled, to bring him at once to the battle-field of Leipzig. Now, holding the post of aide-de-camp to Alexander, he exercised with his Italian accent, his lively gesticulation, his proud flashing eye, a powerful influence, justified certainly by his unequalled perspicacity and precision of judgment. This man had revealed to Alexander the sad truth touching the real condition of France, and this he had told as correctly as though he traversed the country in its length and breadth, and yet he had not set foot there for years. "Do not be alarmed," he repeated continually, "at the idea of braving on his own hearth the colossal who has so long oppressed you; you have already done the most difficult part; you have brought him from the Vistula to the banks of the Rhine. From Frankfort to Paris the distance is only a step; the difficulty, nothing. The prodigious forces of France have been squandered in foreign lands; at home she has nothing; the people of France, too, are disgusted, tired of the yoke they have so long borne. March forward then without delay, march quickly; do not allow the giant, breathing time; go to these Tuilleries that he has made his den, and worn-out France will give him up to you without resistance. You will be astonished at the ease with which you will accomplish this work; but you must reach Paris. Your sword will have scarcely broken the chain that binds oppressed France, when she will herself deliver up to you, her tyrant and yours."

It was these formidable truths, ever present to the mind of the far-seeing Count Pozzo, that obtained him the decisive influence which he wielded in the fatal 1814. Alexander took pleasure in listening to him, for he felt all his passions rise beneath the influence of the Count's words; after having heard him, he forgot the moderation of M. de Metternich, and wished, like the Prussians, to march forward, to cross the Rhine, and engage Napoleon in a last and deadly struggle.

When the propositions of Frankfort became known to the principal agents of the coalition, they were thrown into a violent state of agitation, and expressed the strongest disapprobation of the proceedings. To pause was in their opinion a disastrous weakness, for it

would give the common enemy time to re-construct his forces. To leave him France, with the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees, was to secure him the means of constantly disturbing the peace of Europe. He ought to be deprived, not only of the Rhine and the Alps, but of France, where no rulers ought to be admitted but the Bourbons. Besides, it was necessary to re-establish the dynasties that had been unjustly despoiled, to re-establish the rule of right; in a word, to restore the ancient order of things in Europe. To succeed in all these objects, it was only needed to take one step, but that step should be taken instantly, without pausing to take breath, without delaying a single day.

Unfortunately, letters from France, the reports of secret agents and information furnished by the friends of the house of Bourbon confirmed these rumours, and unveiled each succeeding hour the true state of things in this same month of November, which Napoleon had lost in equivocal parleying, instead of employing it in positive replies which would have been binding on the authors of the Frankfort propositions. A graver event, and one certainly more easy to foresee now occurred. It served to give a new colour to affairs, and induced England, that had lately appeared less violent, to join the most ardent of Napoleon's opponents. The event to which we allude occurred in Holland.

Holland had submitted to Napoleon in 1810, when he had decreed the union of this country with France. She had submitted, in the first place, because at that period Napoleon was irresistible, and besides, many different interests had found momentary advantages in the union. The Dutch revolutionists, the Catholics, the merchants, had submitted to a revolution, which to one party represented the expulsion of the house of Orange, to another the depression of Protestantism, and to a third, commercial annexation with the greatest empire in the world. Perhaps that under a better system of politics, and with the blessing of peace, these diverse interests might have ultimately found beneath the Imperial sceptre a contentedness that would have silenced the voice of national independence; but it was far different. The chief treasurer, Lebrun, continued, like King Louis, to prefer the Orange party, who were rich and noble to the patriots who were neither. The quarrel with the Pope alienated the Catholics in Holland as well as in France. The maritime war reduced the merchants to deep distress, which soon spread to the other classes of society, and affected the humbler classes most. Smuggling being tolerated under King Louis, afforded some amelioration to the scourges of war, but the French custom-house officers having, since the union, deprived the Dutch commerce of this advantage, the evil had reached its height. The maritime inscription with the conscription being introduced into the country, added new afflictions to the universal distress, and then the spirit of patriotism burst forth with renewed violence. In 1813, Hambourg and the Hanseatic provinces having thrown off the Imperial yoke, the commotion extended to Holland, and called forth rigorous measures to stay its effects. A certain

number of unhappy creatures were condemned to the galleys or to death; six were executed at Saardam, four at Leyden, one at the Hague, and two at Rotterdam. These measures, instead of calming the public excitement, tended to increase it. The battles of Lutzen and Bautzen restrained for a moment without appeasing the discontent, which the battles of Leipzig had called forth in all its original strength. The chief treasurer, Lebrun, personally opposed to rigorous measures, had tried to keep well with everybody, but had only succeeded in getting credit for good but powerless intentions. General Molitor, commander of the troops, had won universal respect as a strict and upright soldier, who never profited of the force at his disposal for his private advantage. Notwithstanding the tact of the civil and military chiefs, the Dutch were determined, at the first opportunity, to send off, both the one and the other, without, however, offering them any violence. But the custom-house officers and the police, whom they detested, they were determined to massacre. Whilst things were in this state, numerous English emissaries in the interests of the house of Orange were traversing Holland, promising the support of England to the people if they rose. The latter replied, that at the first appearance of an armed force, they would proclaim the house of Orange, a family so long unpopular, but on which the hopes and wishes of the country were now centered. But an armed force was necessary. The English had certainly some thousand men ready to embark, but access to the roads was intercepted by formidable batteries, or by fleets riding at anchor. Admiral Missiessy, with the Antwerp squadron, defended the mouths of the Scheld and the Meuse; Admiral Verhuel, with the Texel squadron, defended the entrance to the Zuyder Zee. It was then only by land that any assistance could be rendered to the Dutch. Bernadotte had been commissioned, on leaving Leipzig, to deliver Hamburg, Bremen, and Amsterdam, by the aid of the army du Nord, but he had done nothing. He had led his entire force towards Holstein, for the purpose of reducing Denmark, and forcing the king to give up Norway. With this intention, and trying to get rid of Marshal Davout, who was the chief stay of the Danes, he concluded a treaty with him for the free evacuation of Hamburg, which left the marshal at liberty to return to Holland with 40,000 men. On the reception of this intelligence, the English and Austrian agents uttered loud exclamations, the former because they did not wish that 40,000 French should be sent into Holland, and the latter, because the cabinet of Vienna, at a time when they were labouring to propagate the system of mediation, had formed an alliance with Denmark, and taken it under their protection; both parties demanded that Bernadotte should be deprived of the command of those 80,000 men, whom he turned to his own private advantage; but Alexander, who had become strongly attached to Bernadotte, since they had jointly arranged the Finland affair, had moderated the general irritation, and the Swedish prince was only commanded to send a Russian and Prussian corps to Holland, which was done about the beginning of November.

At the approach of this auxiliary force, the Dutch had ceased to dissimulate. The entire force at General Molitor's command only consisted of some skeleton battalions, containing at most 3,000 men, 500 or 600 French gendarmes, a handful of custom-house officers, universally detested, though very honest men, 500 faithful Swiss, who had not a little contributed to excite the public indignation, and lastly, a foreign regiment, well disciplined, but in which there were 800 Russians, 600 Austrians, and 600 Prussians. This force was not competent either by numerical strength or the organization of the troops to hold the country. Admiral Verhuel commanded at Texel 1,500 Spaniards, who at the first signal might revolt, and force him to retire on board his ships.

The corps of Bulow, despatched by Bernadotte, having appeared on the Yssel, General Molitor issued from Amsterdam with all his disposable forces, and took up a position at Utrecht to guard the line from Naarden to Gorcum. This was the signal for insurrection. The Orangists, having assaulted the fishermen, the sailors, and the peasants, entered Amsterdam on the evening of the 15th November, preceded by women and children, and bearing the flag of the House of Orange. At this sight, all the populace rose, and, during the night, burned the barracks situate on the quays, where the custom-house officers and the agents of the French police lived. The populace committed no offence against the high functionaries, nor against the Chief Treasurer; they contented themselves with merely parading the insurrectionary flag beneath his windows. The only force that remained to the Chief Treasurer was about fifty gendarmes, faithful, indeed, but powerless against so general a movement. He summoned, during the night, the principal members of the rich commercial aristocracy, upon whom he had depended for support; he found them polite but cold, and perceived that if through prudence they had submitted to a powerful government that humored them, they returned at the first opportunity to a government that corresponded with their tastes and aristocratic habits. Seeing there was nothing to hope from these, the Chief Treasurer stepped into his carriage, and repaired to Utrecht, where he met General Molitor, then threatened in front by a force of 20,000 Russians and Prussians, attacked right, left, and rear by insurrections of all kinds, and having at the utmost, not more than 4,000 men under his command. General Molitor, in order not to be cut off from Belgium, soon retired to the Wahal, accompanied by the Chief Treasurer, who had experienced no worse treatment than a few popular hisses. Dating from this time, there was not a city in Holland that was not revolutionized. Leyden, the Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht, established regencies almost entirely composed of Orangists, and soon the Prince of Orange, after having disembarked in Holland, entered Amsterdam amidst acclamations. It was announced that Holland, without defining the form of government, would again place herself under the protection of that ancient house, beneath whose rule she had passed through the most important crises of her history. As to the rest, few excesses were committed, and these were directed against the custom-

house officers, or the receivers of the *droits réunis*, who certainly ought not to have been made to expiate the faults of their government. The populace of the great cities, violent and fickle as usual, applauded the restoration of the Princes of Orange as warmly as they had applauded their fall, and the enlightened patriots tolerated their return as the termination of a foreign despotism. With the exception of Admiral Missiessy with the Scheldt fleet, and Admiral Verhuel with the Texel fleet, all Holland recognised the House of Orange. The English landed General Graham at the head of 6,000 men.

Any reflecting person could easily have foreseen in these events dark prognostic for France herself. It was a ray of light to the English. This spontaneous revolution, which at the first appearance of the so-called emancipating bayonets, burst forth, and almost without violence, by an irresistible impulse, overturned the recent creations of the French empire, to re-establish the ancient order of things, showed the English that the same changes might be wrought elsewhere. On all sides, secret agents—merchants who went frequently from Holland to Belgium, Belgians pursued by the French police, all gave the same accounts, and said that if the allied troops would advance rapidly on Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, they would find the people every where disposed to revolt against a government which during the past fifteen years had oppressed them by the conscription, the *droits réunis*, and a maritime war; that besides they would find the fortresses without arms, without men, and without provisions; that the magnificent Antwerp fleet would belong to whoever would seize it; and, in fine, that to secure success, the Allies had only to advance. So much was not needed to rouse the British passions, and induce the English government to adopt new and decisive resolutions. The reinforcements destined for Holland were immediately prepared; General Graham, and the Russian and Prussian generals, received orders to march at once on Antwerp; earnest remonstrances were addressed to Bernadotte requesting that he would cease to occupy himself with Denmark, and march with all his forces into the Low Countries, trusting to the Allies to secure him Norway as they had promised. Lastly, Lord Aberdeen received fresh instructions relative to the basis of a future peace.

The Frankfort propositions detailed in the note given to M. de Saint-Aignan, and in the subsequent letters of M. de Metternich, had caused great dissatisfaction in London. The people there could not understand like those at Frankfort, the danger involved in the passage of the Rhine. The Londoners were astonished that the campaign finished at Leipzig, and they could not understand why the armies should stop short on a road that seemed so promising, and whose termination presented such great advantages. England found the proposition very indigestible, of leaving France her natural limits, that is to say, the Scheldt and Antwerp, and she regarded it as a duty on the part of the Allies to deliver her from the disagreeable and constantly threatening presence of a French fleet at Flushing. Russia had found the existence of the grand duchy of Warsaw obnoxious; all Germany had desired the removal of the French from Hamburg, Bremen, and Magdebourg; Austria

did not wish their presence at Laybach and Trieste. All these desires had been satisfied. Should England be the only power whose wishes were to remain ungratified? And had she not a right to demand that the war should be continued, if a few additional efforts could deliver her from the presence of the French at Antwerp? The English politicians did not certainly approve all the subversive projects of the more excited members of the coalition, such as the dethronement of the Kings of Saxony and Denmark, but they adopted amongst those projects those which suited England and those which would oblige France to retire from Gorcum to Lille, or at least from Gorcum to Brussels and Ghent. In recovering Antwerp and Flushing, a combination was presented highly agreeable to England, which was to render Holland sufficiently powerful to oppose France, and the English ardently wished that the house of Orange could join the ancient United Provinces to the Austrian Low Countries. This combination was become an object of the most passionate desires of the English, since the spontaneous insurrection of Holland, which, it was said, would be soon imitated in Belgium, had revealed the possibility of pushing still further the advantages gained over Napoleon.

The instructions Lord Aberdeen had received to adhere to the Frankfort propositions were already a little out of date. The British Cabinet modified these instructions, and recommended their minister not to consider himself bound by the propositions of Frankfort. They prescribed to him as the formal conditions of England—the continuation of the war, the retirement of France within the limits of 1790, and an absolute silence in all treaties of peace touching maritime rights. It was not said that England would carry the war to such an extremity as to dethrone Napoleon, though this result would be the most agreeable to the secret wishes of the English people, but this wish was not expressed, because England had pledged herself to treat with the head of the French empire, and it would have been a shocking inconsistency to retract this engagement; but it was declared in a general manner that the war should be continued until France was circumscribed within the limits of 1790.

Lord Aberdeen was commissioned, in order to entice the continental powers by the bait of money, of which they stood greatly in need, to purchase the Antwerp fleet, should the capture be effected; the purchase money would have represented a half-year's subsidies. Lastly, to flatter Austria in particular—Austria, whose jealousy of Russia was already perceptible, Lord Aberdeen was commissioned to say to M. de Metternich, that if in some details England humoured Russia, on the whole she took part with Austria, because that on almost every point they agreed, and that England would always prefer sensible advice to the wild fancies of certain enthusiasts, but in return England expected that Austria would vote for the consolidation of a powerful kingdom in the Low Countries, which should extend from Texel to Antwerp.

Such were the instructions sent to the British legation precisely at the moment when Napoleon decided, but too late, to accept, purely

and simply the Frankfort propositions. Thus the month we had lost from November to December had left all the Powers time to reflect, especially England, that, enlightened by the insurrection in Holland, had conceived the hope and the desire of depriving France not only of Texel but of Antwerp. It is evident that a prompt and categorical adhesion given on the 16th November, might have placed the Allies at Frankfort in an embarrassment from which they could not have easily extricated themselves.

It is scarcely necessary to say that when these fresh instructions arrived at Frankfort, all there were prepared to receive them. All those who were desirous of advancing until Napoleon should be overcome, had spoken out and demanded that no account should be taken of the overtures made to M. de St. Aignan. The Emperor Alexander was only too well disposed to coincide in these views, through resentment against Napoleon as well as through the exuberance of his pride. To make a triumphant entry into Paris would be a revenge for the destruction of Moscow, that transported him with joy. Count Pozzo excited him by repeating that what had taken place in Holland would be re-produced in Belgium and in France, if the Allies hastened—if they boldly crossed the Rhine—if, in a word, they did not allow the common enemy time to breathe. The Prussians, ever spurred on by hate, ardently desired to advance. Blucher said, that for his part, were he free to act, he would advance to Paris. The Austrians even, though highly sensitive to the dangers to which they would be exposed beyond the Rhine, did not deny that vast advantages might be reaped there. Whilst England was endeavouring to gain Antwerp for the house of Orange, they could gain Italy for themselves and their arch-dukes. There was no lack of motives for continuing the war, although in the case of the Austrians, the danger of fresh risks was united to the vexation of seeing the ill-disguised preponderance of the Russians, and the brutal violence of the Prussians. But there was in this question a decisive reason for them as for everyone else, which was the wish of England; England that paid the Allies, and who, by her victories in Spain, had acquired a continental importance that she had never before possessed; and there was, besides, her all-powerful fleet. In short, she held the balance between the contending powers, and could make it turn on which side she pleased. It was consequently decided that the war should be pursued without relaxation. Prussia was moved to this resolution by a motive of vengeance; Russia through vanity; Austria through a selfish compliance with England; and England through the various motives that gave her an interest in the Scheldt; all were urged by the impulsion of events which were hurrying to the close a struggle so old, so embittered, so implacable. On the 10th December M. de Metternich replied to the note in which M. de Caulaincourt had adhered purely and simply to the message of M. de St. Aignan. The purport of the reply was that France was rather late in her acceptance of the Frankfort propositions, but that nevertheless he would communicate this tardy acceptance to the Allies. He did not say whether

in consequence of these communications military operations would be suspended, and as it had never been agreed since the rupture at Prague, that negotiations, in case they were resumed, should cause a suspension of the war, the Allies might, without violating any engagement, continue to advance, provided they continued their pacific policy. Therefore the pretended despatch of the French reply to the allied courts left sufficient time for action without exhibiting extraordinary inconsistency.

However, as England wished to carry on the war for the attainment of an object which was solely to her own advantage, it was but reasonable she should pay the expenses of the late campaign, and as all the belligerents were deficient in the money needed for these immense armaments, it was decided that England should be asked for new subsidies; and in order to point out the largeness of the amount needed, and the necessity of an immediate supply, there was sent to London a man who had already played an important part in the councils of the Allies—Count Pozzo. He set out for the purpose of laying before the British minister the budget of the winter campaign.

But in the hypothesis of an immediate resumption of hostilities, the question of what would be the best plan to adopt awakened serious consideration, and might give rise to grave dissensions in a coalition where the interests and the vanity of the different parties were in direct opposition, and where even the imperative need of conservation only kept up a harmony more apparent than real. Besides that, the allied forces were considerably reduced by the intensity of the struggle; they were also divided by the diversity of the objects that each had in view. The corps of Kleist, Klenau, Tauenzein, Benningsen, that had all taken part in the formidable affair of Leipzig, were left behind to blockade the Elbe fortresses. Bernadotte with the Swedes, with the Prussians of Bulow, with the Russians of Wintzingerode, under pretext of opposing Marshal Davout, had deviated from the principal object of the war, in order to snatch Norway from the Danes. This proceeding had deeply exasperated the Austrians, under whose protection the Danes were, and excited a general distrust of Alexander's sincerity, who was accused of encouraging Bernadotte under-hand, whilst he publicly blamed him. It was with difficulty that the new Swedish prince could be induced to give a detachment for the re-establishment of the house of Orange. There remained then on the Rhine only the army of the Prince Schwarzenberg, quartered between Frankfort and Bâle, and that of Marshal Blucher stationed between Frankfort and Coblentz, having in their ranks Bavarians, Badeners, and Wurtembergers. After the adjunction of the latter, and the losses of the campaign, the two armies were estimated at from 220,000 to 230,000 disposable men. It is true that the new German contingents having replaced the troops that were blockading the fortresses, and Bernadotte being recalled to add his forces to the main body, the Allies could now number on the Rhine 220,000 men; they hoped to raise numerous

recruits in Poland, Prussia, and Austria; they had about 70,000 men in Italy, 100,000 on the Spanish frontiers, so that they would be able to attack France in March and April with 600,000 men. But for the moment, they could only collect 220,000 men, of whom 160,000 were Austrians, Russians, Prussians, and Bavarians, under the Prince of Schwarzenberg, and 60,000 Prussians, Russians, Wurtembergers, Hessians, and Badeners, under Marshal Blucher. It was a daring enterprise, that of crossing the Rhine in front of Napoleon with such forces; but according to the accounts received, he had not more than 80,000 men, and it was therefore not believed imprudent to encounter him with 220,000. The Allies would have been still more determined had they known that he had not a force of more than 60,000 men to oppose a sudden invasion.

Still, the most enlightened personages at Frankfort looked with suspicion on the reports furnished by the agents of the coalition; they could not believe that Napoleon had not at least 100,000 men under arms. They insisted therefore on the necessity of acting with the greatest prudence in the attempt to enter France. On this occasion each had a plan of his own; the Prussians and the Russians had one, the Austrians another, all inspired by the desire, so common in war, of drawing round themselves the main body of the forces, and so becoming the centre of operations. The Prussians wished, with 180,000 men out of the 220,000, to cross the Rhine between Coblentz and Mayence, whilst another body should cross between Mayence and Strasbourg; that they should advance boldly in the midst of the fortresses that defended this part of France, such as Coblentz, Mayence, Landau, Strasbourg, in the first line; Mezières, Montmedy, Luxembourg, Thionville, Metz, in the second line; they asserted that these fortresses could be quickly captured from the French, if they had only left small garrisons there, but if, on the contrary, in order to guard the fortresses, they had weakened the main body of the army, this weakness should be profited of; the invaders should attack the main body, which they would be certain to defeat, and drive the remnant back to Paris, passing over the fortresses, which they could at a later period attack with the different corps called from the banks of the Elbe. The Prussian staff considered this plan of operation as both the most scientific and the most daring, for in one case, they would secure the fortresses, and so establish strongholds for themselves as they advanced; in the other they would perhaps reach Paris in a few days' march.

The Austrians had another plan, dictated also by their private views, but perfectly rational, at least to judge by the results. They thought it would be imprudent to get entangled in this labyrinth of fortresses, extending from Strasbourg to Coblentz, from Metz to Mezières. They said this would be to *take the bull by the horns.* They maintained that without exhausting his resources, Napoleon would content himself with putting the fortresses in a position to resist a *coup de main*, and that he would himself be found manœuvring between them with his concentrated forces, ready to fall upon the

allied army; they also asserted that the Allies would be more weakened by blockading these fortresses than Napoleon would be by defending them. The Austrians proposed a plan of operations radically different. The weak side of France was not, in their opinion, the north-east, from Strasbourg to Coblentz, from Metz to Mezières, where she was protected by several rivers and immense fortifications; her weak point was due east, along the Jura, where, reckoning on the neutrality of the Swiss, she had never thought of erecting defences. The best plan then would be to take the road to Bâle, and cross the Rhine at that point, where it never freezes, to traverse Switzerland that was crying aloud for deliverance, and thus take France in the rear, a proceeding that would be productive of many advantages. It would cut off France from Italy, and deprive her of the assistance she might receive if Napoleon recalled Prince Eugene, and at the same time it would so isolate this prince, that he must succumb by the mere fact of his isolation.

It is easy to divine the motives which, independent of the real excellence of this plan, induced Austria to forfeit it. She wished to penetrate into Switzerland, to re-establish her influence there, and not alone deprive France of the assistance of Italy, but Italy of the succours of France. Switzerland was, in fact, in a state of extraordinary fermentation, and disposed to imitate the example of Holland, with this difference, that there was in Switzerland a very strong French party, with well-founded and legitimate pretensions. The cantons formerly dominant—and amongst these were to be found some of the democratic as well as the aristocratic, for ambition is not inherent to one principle more than another; these cantons, in short, flattered themselves they could recover the territory they formerly ruled. The little cantons aspired to possess, as formerly, the Italian bailiwicks, Vatteline and Valais; Berne was anxious to possess the Pays de Vaud; Argovie had the same designs with regard to Porentruy; the aristocratic families remembered with regret the authority they once exercised over the middle classes. On the contrary, the territory formerly subject, the classes anciently oppressed, did not wish, on any terms, to submit again to their former masters; deplorable divisions, to which Napoleon had put a termination by the act of mediation. Unfortunately this noble act, worthy of the time when he concluded the Concordat, the peace of Amiens, and the peace of Lunéville, had been soon disfigured, like all the others, by his infractive genius. He had filled Switzerland with his custom-house officers, and even with his soldiers; he occupied the Tessin with a detachment of the Italian army, which was a strong argument against Swiss neutrality. Moreover, in closely blockading Switzerland to prevent smuggling, he had, in certain manufacturing cantons, caused the labourers' wages to fall from 15 to 5 sous per day, and had rendered Switzerland as wretched as Holland. However, these evils had not made the liberated territories forget their independence, and if there were some of the ancient régime who cried out for the invaders, there was a party of the new school who opposed them with all their might. Switzerland was, at

this epoch, the only country that Napoleon had not entirely disgusted with French influence and the principles of our revolution. The struggle was therefore obstinate and intense between the two parties. The partizans of the old régime pressed Austria to advance into their country, and she desired nothing more earnestly than to gratify them, and to adopt a procedure that would restore her influence in Switzerland by re-establishing there the aristocratic power, and would secure her rule in Italy by cutting it off at the present moment from French aid.

The Prussians and Russians found fault with this plan, in the first place because it was dictated by the private interests of Austria, and would turn the allied army from the most direct route to Paris, and necessitate a wide detour, besides separating the main body of the army into many divisions, for it was absolutely necessary to keep an army in the Low Countries, and an intermediary army in the direction of Coblentz and Mayence, which, with the proposed army for entering by the Jura, would cause three divisions, and give Napoleon an opportunity of exercising his favourite tactics, and engaging his enemies in succession.

The English, who were generally disposed to take part with the Austrians against the Prussians and Russians, and who were besides offended at the authority assumed by Alexander, showed themselves favourably inclined to the plan of Prince Schwarzenberg. In addition to these reasons, they had especial need of the Austrians to establish the kingdom of the Low Countries, and were extremely desirous of withdrawing Switzerland from the influence of France. The Emperor Alexander, on the contrary, rejected the Austrian project from a variety of motives. Although at Frankfort the Allies overwhelmed each other with protestations of fidelity and devotedness, through fear of seeing the coalition dissolved; although Alexander added to his protestations a certain coquetry of manner, which, however innocent in his youth, had become tinctured with craft as he advanced in life; in short, notwithstanding all these flattering externals, the Allies were frequently on the point of coming to a rupture, and especially in a recent affair touching Bernadotte, whom the English accused of having totally neglected Holland, whilst the Austrians accused him of having outraged Denmark, and the Russians, though outwardly disavowing his acts, were suspected of encouraging him in secret. Alexander, openly convicted of duplicity, had exhibited considerable ill-humour, and was especially disposed to quarrel with the Austrians, who had on this occasion unveiled his secret plottings. Moreover, though flattering, in presence of the Allies, the violent party that advocated the extirpation of every trace of the French revolution, he flattered at the same time the Poles, and the German and Swiss liberals. He was thus a counter-revolutionist with some, and a liberal with the others, as much through sagacious foresight as through mobility of disposition; still his real inclinations were towards liberal principles, through opposition to the despotism of Napoleon, and as a consequence of his education. Brought up, in fact, by a Swiss colonel, Laharpe, having

had at his court, for the education of his sisters, governesses of the same nation, he had listened to their supplications, had appeared touched by them, and had protested that he would never allow a counter-revolution to be effected in Switzerland.

This question had finished by rendering the Allies uneasy as to the continuance of the coalition, However, Austria being determined on the plan of turning the fortresses, and marching at least as far as Bâle, and having obtained, thanks to the English, a majority of voices she had promised not to violate the Swiss neutrality, and to be content with approaching the frontiers, adding that if the Swiss rose spontaneously and appealed to the Allies, they could not refuse to pass through gates that opened of their own accord. Alexander had not positively disputed this reasoning; he had contented himself with denying that the Swiss demanded the violation of their frontier, and had consented to a general movement towards Bâle, on the conditions we have stated.

Consequently, from the 10th to the 20th of December, all the details of the march beyond the Rhine, were regulated. It was agreed that the military operations should be continued without pausing to negotiate; that Blucher, with the corps of York, Sacken, and Langeron, with the Wurtembergers, and the Badeners, comprising about 60,000 men, should prepare the passage of the Rhine between Coblentz and Mayence, and should advance afterwards amongst the French fortresses, that at the same time, the grand army of Prince Schwarzenberg, composed of Austrians, Bavarians, Russians, and Prussian and Russian guards, comprising nearly 160,000 men, should advance to Bâle, and cross the Rhine in the vicinity of this city, or at Bâle itself, if the Swiss should put an end to all scruples by opening the gates themselves; the Allies would thus turn the French defences, by penetrating through Huningue, Béfort, and Langres. These principles of action having been acceded to, the army marched forward. Blucher concentrated his forces between Mayence and Coblentz; the Prince of Schwarzenberg directed his course towards Switzerland, advancing to Bâle by Strasbourg. The sovereigns and the diplomatists quitted Frankfort for Fribourg.

The Swiss Diet, of whom the majority were sagacious men, who though they regretted the excesses Napoleon had committed in the days of his power, still retained a grateful recollection of his benefits, and did not desire either a counter-revolution or a foreign invasion. The Diet had sent agents to Paris, requiring that France should recognise the Swiss neutrality, and efface every trace of the acts that had rendered the neutrality illusory. Napoleon, obliged by circumstances to receive these demands, had at first withdrawn his troops from Tessin, and then declared that he looked upon Swiss neutrality as an essential principle of European law, which he had pledged himself solemnly to respect, and that he saw in his title of "Mediator of the Swiss Confederation," only a title commemorative of the services rendered by France to Switzerland, but not in any sense a title conferring any real power.

The Diet, armed with this declaration, had immediately despatched two deputies to the allied sovereigns, to ask that they, in their turn, should recognise a neutrality that France admitted in so explicit a manner. To this proceeding, the Diet joined another, which would have been very wise, if it had been seriously meant, and which consisted in assembling a federal army of 12,000 men, stationed between Bâle and Schaffhause, under the command of M. de Watteville. Whilst they acted thus, the principal families in the Grisons, in the little cantons, and Berne, had sent secret emissaries to each of the sovereigns, saying that the Diet was a fallacious, an usurping authority, on which they set no value; and that the Allies ought immediately to cross the Helvetic frontier to aid the true and only legitimate authority, that of past times, and re-establish it for the benefit of the Allies.

And as the Swiss uttered speeches of a two-fold character, so also did the allied powers. In public, they said to the representatives of the Diet, that they regarded Swiss neutrality as an important principle of European law, and that they would endeavour for the future to render it inviolate; that for the present, without meditating any infraction of this neutrality, they could not pledge themselves to respect in every case a principle so often violated by France, and feebly defended by Switzerland herself. They cited, in support of this reasoning, the occupation of Tessin, the title of Mediator, assumed by Napoleon, the regiments in the service of France that had lately been recruited, and, in short, an event little noted, the borrowing of the Swiss territory, made by the Boudet division, in 1813, in order to pass into Germany. They did not speak more explicitly as to how far these precedents would influence the conduct of the Allies, they limited themselves to establishing their titles without saying they would use them. Under-hand, they insinuated to the Grisons, to the little cantons, to the people of Berne, that they ought to rise and overturn the Diet, that in this case the allied armies would enter into Switzerland, and *en passant*, restore to the Swiss Vatteline, the Italian bailiwicks, Valais, the Pays de Vaud, Porentruy, &c.

The reasons alleged by the diplomatists of the coalition had not great weight, for Tessin was evacuated, and its occupation had been, after all, only an insignificant punishment for flagrant acts of smuggling; the title of Mediator was only an act of gratitude on the part of the Swiss, entailing no dependence whatsoever on France; in short, the admission of the capitulated regiments into the service of the different powers had not been regarded at any period as a violation of neutrality. But in this great European conflict, law was only a vain word, and on the 19th of December, spite of repeated assurances to the Emperor Alexander, that the Allies would not enter Switzerland without being invited thither, Prince Schwarzenberg approached the bridge of Bâle, and took up a position in front of the Swiss troops under General Watteville. The Austrian generalissimo expected every moment an insurrection at Berne, which having overturned the Diet and set up a new government, he might then say he was summoned

by the Swiss themselves. Nevertheless, weary of waiting, the Prince of Schwarzenberg proceeded on the 21st of December to cross the bridge of Bâle, and the commander of the Swiss troops, looking upon it as impossible to resist all Europe in arms, and excusing his want of courage by his powerlessness, made a feint of protesting, and then ceded the passage without striking a blow. On the arrival of this intelligence, the movement so impatiently expected at Berne broke forth, and the Diet, which had been legally established in virtue of an excellent constitution, and had the recommendation of twelve years' successful and tranquil legislation, was declared void. Similar movements took place in divers cantons, and the Allies took advantage of these commotions which they had excited, instead of awaiting, to commit a flagrant violation of the law of nations. As to the rest, the Allies issued a proclamation, in which they declared they would henceforth invariably respect Swiss neutrality—that is to say, when they would no longer need to violate it, and when it would be their interest that it should be respected.

Alexander had been deceived, and having learned some days later that the commotions upon which the Allies justified their conduct, instead of proceeding, had followed the invasion, he was both offended and irritated to the highest degree. But he could scarcely complain, for Austria had done to him on this occasion what he had himself done frequently, especially in the affair of the Swedes against the Danes. Moreover, it would have been still more vexatious to break with the Allies than to be deceived by them, and he contented himself with complaining bitterly, and advising the Vandois and all the subject countries to remain quiet, and that he would not permit them to be placed under the old régime. The allied armies advanced and soon inundated Switzerland and Franche-Comté. The Bavarians took their way towards Béfort, the Austrians advanced on Berne and Geneva, in order to reach Besançon and Dole by crossing the Jura. Blucher, near Mayence, waited until the Austrians should have accomplished the wide détour they had undertaken, to cross the Rhine himself. Thus, on the fatal day of the 21st of December, 1813, the Empire, after more than twenty years of unexampled triumphs, was, by a terrible revulsion of fortune, invaded in her turn; and France, which far from being the criminal, had been the sufferer; France, after having severely suffered for the fault, was about to suffer severely in expiation, destined thus to be twice a victim—once of the wonderful man who had governed her gloriously but harshly, and next, victim to the monarchs who came to take vengeance on him.

Fearing above all things an insurrection of the populace, the Allies, on entering into France, made every effort to tranquillize the public mind. By a declaration published at Frankfort on the 1st of Dec., the Allies endeavoured to show that they did not wish to detract from the greatness of France. Prince Schwarzenberg ordered that the following proclamation should everywhere precede the allied troops:

"Frenchmen!

"Victory has led the allied armies to your frontier; they wish to

cross.

"We do not make war on France; but we repulse the yoke that your government wishes to impose on our countries, which have the same claims to independence and happiness as yours.

"Magistrates, landed proprietors, labourers, remain in your houses; an enforcement of public order, a respect for private property, the most strict discipline, shall mark the passage of the allied armies. They are not animated by a spirit of vengeance; they do not wish to visit on France the numberless evils with which, during twenty years, she has overwhelmed her neighbours and the most remote countries.

"Their glory shall be to have brought to a rapid conclusion the woes of Europe. The only conquest they desire is that of peace for France, and for all Europe an assured tranquillity. We had hoped to find peace before touching French soil; we are now going to seek it there."

On learning what had occurred in Holland, and the first movement of the Allies towards the Low Countries, Napoleon had felt immediately the danger of allowing himself to be attacked on this side, for it was that part of the ancient conquests of France which his enemies were most disposed to contest, and to maintain the legal, it was necessary to secure the actual possession of the country. He had, therefore, hastened to send thither quickly all the disposable succours at his command.

In the beginning of the negotiations, Napoleon was desirous, as we have seen, of keeping Holland, not so much in the hope of retaining it definitely, as with the intention of using it as an object of compensation. But Holland having suddenly escaped from his hands, he had sent off, with the utmost expedition, some forces to the Wahal. He had despatched General Rampon to Gorcum, with the National Guards, raised in French Flanders, to garrison the place. He had sent the Duke of Plaisance, son of the chief treasurer, to Antwerp, with orders to enclose the Scheldt squadron in the basins, to withdraw the sailors, and give them occupation, some on board the flotilla, others in the city fortifications; he was also to assemble at Antwerp the neighbouring depôts, the conscripts, the custom-house officers, and the gendarmes returning from Holland. Napoleon had also sent General Decaen, whose services were no longer required at Catalonia, to Belgium, in order to organize there, as quickly as possible, the 1st corps, which was to be drawn, as we have seen, from the depôts of Marshal Davout. Perceiving clearly that this corps could not be reconstituted promptly enough to avert the first approach of danger, and wishing at any price to save the line of the Wahal, Napoleon had selected in his guard all the disposable men, to march without delay into northern Brabant. He sent, first, General Lefebvre-Desnoëttes with two thousand light cavalry, then Generals Roguet and Barrois, each with an infantry division of the Young Guard; lastly, he had sent Marshal Mortier himself to Namur, at the head of the Old Guard. If the enemy only meditated a winter campaign in the Low Countries, Napoleon flattered himself that he could thus mar their measures, and have time afterwards to transport his Guard where the danger should be most serious during the campaign. If, on the contrary, the chief efforts of the Allies

should be concentred on Belgium, the Guard would be already present on the principal scene of operations. The public mind being greatly agitated in Belgium, and the people much disposed to imitate the example of the Dutch, Napoleon had sent thither an excellent officer of gendarmerie, Colonel Henry (now raised to the rank of General), and already distinguished by his services in Vendée. He advanced into Belgium at the head of some hundred gendarmes, chosen from the *élite* of that body.

Such had been the first orders given immediately after the insurrection in Holland, towards the end of November. The intelligence of the passage of the Rhine, near Bâle, on the 21st of December, without confounding had still strongly stirred Napoleon's feelings, for he immediately discovered the designs of his enemies; he perceived they no longer wished to negotiate with him, that the Frankfort propositions had soon become, what at first they were not, a decoy, thanks to the fault he had committed of not taking the Allies at the first word; he now saw they were determined to carry hostilities to the last extremity, even during winter, and that they were determined to finish the war with the remnants of those battalions that had contested the gigantic battle-fields of Dresden, Leipzig, and Hanau. There was no other course remaining than to defend himself with what remained of the troops that had fought these same battles, adding thereto whatever he could assemble in one or two months.

It was no longer a question of employing the winter and spring in raising 600,000 men, it was now necessary to make use quickly of those that the prefects had been able to tear from our desolated fields in the months of November and December, and unfortunately, the number was not considerable. The appeal to the classes of 1811, 1812, 1813, which was expected to yield 140,000 men, had only produced 80,000; good soldiers, it is true, and an appeal to the earlier classes had yielded at the utmost 30,000. Napoleon ordered that these conscripts should be distributed immediately, according to the localities in which they were placed, some in the depôts of the old corps of Davout, situate in Belgium, others in the corps of Macdonald, Marmont, and Victor, dispersed along the Rhine. He ordered Marshal Marmont, not to suffer himself to be shut up in Mayence, but to issue forth, march to this side of the Vosges and collect on the way the conscripts originally destined to join him at Mayence. He ordered Marshal Victor to quit Strasbourg, and leave there, besides the national guards already stationed in the place, some skeleton battalions, with a portion of his conscripts, and to distribute the others in the ranks of the 2nd corps, which he commanded. The conscripts destined for Italy were stopped at Grenoble and Chambéry and ordered to Lyons, where Napoleon wished to form of the depôts of Dauphiné, Provence, and Auvergne, an army to oppose the enemy in the passes of Switzerland and Savoy. The conscripts of Burgundy, Auvergne, Bourbonnais, Berry, Normandy, and Orleannais were ordered to Paris, to be employed there, some in the guard, the others in the depôts that were to fall back on the capital at the approach of

the invading armies. The conscripts of the south were still to journey on to Bordeaux, Toulouse, Montpellier, Nîmes, where the reserves of the two Spanish armies were being organized.

This first direction given to 110,000 men, showed the use Napoleon intended to make of the short time that remained to him, The corps of Macdonald, of Marmont, of Victor were to collect as many conscripts as they could, arm, equip, and drill them, advancing slowly to Paris. Here was a sufficient force to retard at least for some days, the progress of the invasion. Napoleon busied himself in creating an army of reserve, the detachments of which were to join him as they were formed. It was to be composed of the new battalions of guard, of which a portion was to be organized at Paris, and of the depôts that were falling back on the capital, and which were to be filled with conscripts from the central provinces. It was not alone the depôts from the Rhine that were assembled at Paris, all those that were not necessary to the defence of the eastern and southern frontiers were called thither, in order that they should be increased by as large a number as could be added. It was the old Duke of Valmy, so long superintendant of the depôts of the Rhine, who was to discharge the same functions between the Rhine and the Seine. It was hoped that two divisions of reserve should thus be formed, and which were to be put under the command of the illustrious General Gerard, who had distinguished himself in the late campaigns. As soon as the conscripts should have arrived, be drafted into the different battalions, armed and half equipped, these two divisions were to set out to join the army, and be organized and drilled on the way. Napoleon had established in the capital clothing magazines, where he accelerated the activity of the workmen by high pay, in order that two or three thousand suits should be finished daily.

He acted in the same manner with regard to the cavalry, who were very much needed to resist the innumerable bands of Cossacks that the enemy were about to pour into France. He made the depôts of cavalry that were between the frontiers and Paris, fall back on Versailles; those of Normandy and Picardy were also brought there, with the horse soldiers who had returned on foot through Wesel, and the necessary orders were given to equip and mount them. All the working saddlers and coachmakers of the capital were employed to make saddles and harness, and paid ready money. The prefects of the neighbouring departments were authorized to seize all the disposable horses, with the legitimate excuse that France must be defended from a Cossack invasion. It was announced that every horse fit for service should be paid for in ready money by the general commanding the cavalry depôt. The expenses that the treasurer could not immediately discharge, were supplied from the private reserve of the Tuilleries.

In short, Napoleon, foreseeing that he would be obliged to supply his deficiency in infantry by additional force in cavalry, was making formidable preparations at Vincennes. The companies of artillery that were not needed in the fortresses, the field matériel that was not

indispensable, were brought to Vincennes, where, as we have already mentioned, conscripts, horses, and harness, were to be collected, and where from four to five hundred cannon were to be mounted

These arrangements, notwithstanding the activity with which they were carried out, were far from corresponding to the extent and proximity of the danger. Twelve or fifteen thousand conscripts thrown precipitately into the skeleton battalions of the guards, twenty or twenty-five thousand draughted into the depôts concentrated at Paris, offered only a feeble resource to the marshals who were to fall back on Champagne and Burgundy, with the débris of Leipsic and Hanau. Napoleon decided, however repugnant to his feelings, to make use of the National Guards. These offered ready-made soldiers, to whom in so imminent a danger it was very natural to have recourse. Napoleon ordered the prefects of Burgundy, Picardy, Normandy, Loraine, and Brittany, to appeal to those municipalities where discontent had not extinguished patriotism, and ask them to furnish select companies of National Guards. The levy of 300,000 from the more remote classes, and of 160,000 men from the class of 1815, not having been, through want of time, raised in these provinces, the inhabitants had no cause to complain of too frequent appeals, nor could they refuse, whatever their political opinions might be, to make a last effort to repulse the common enemy from their native land. Napoleon appointed Paris, Meaux, Montereau, Troye, as places for the rendezvous of these National Guards. Alsace, and Franche-Compté were also to furnish some to occupy the defiles of the Vosges.

Unfortunately, there was a want of muskets to arm these troops, for spite of the manufactories established at Paris and Versailles, fire-arms did not arrive in sufficient quantities, and there was, as we have already said, more hands than muskets, though there had been so great an expenditure of human life from the walls of Moscow to the banks of the Tagus.

One resource remained, to which Napoleon was ready to appeal without considering the sacrifices it would entail; it was that which the two armies of Spain offered, which, assembled before Paris, would have numbered 80,000 or 100,000 admirable soldiers. With this resource alone, he would have the means of overpowering the Allies, and forcing them back into the Rhine. But it was doubtful whether he could get them up in time. The Duke of San Carlos, who had set out for the Catalonian frontier, had crossed and gone into Spain, and nothing more had been heard of him. The unhappy Ferdinand, as anxious to quit Valençay for the Escurial as Napoleon was to bring his soldiers from the Adour, was dying of impatience; but nothing came of it. Joseph, profiting opportunely of circumstances to escape from a false position, wrote to Napoleon to say that when France was on the eve of invasion, he could not think of making conditions or demanding compensation, and he only asked to serve France, no matter in what rank or in what place. Napoleon received him at Paris, restored his rank of French prince, as well as his place in the Council of Regency, and decided that without giving him, as formerly, the title

of "King of Spain," he should be called "King Joseph," and his wife "Queen Julia."

This arrangement, which had the advantage of re-establishing concord in the bosom of the Imperial family, was, up to this time, the sole result of the negotiations of Valençay. As all the troops could not be immediately withdrawn from the Spanish frontier, Napoleon wished that a part, at least, should come at once. He ordered the Marshals Suchet and Soult to hold themselves ready to march with their entire armies towards the North of France; and, meanwhile, Marshal Suchet was to send off 12,000 of his best troops to Lyons, and Marshal Soult 14,000 or 15,000 of his best to Paris. Relays were prepared along the roads to transport the infantry by post, as had been done in former times. Undoubtedly, the withdrawal of these two detachments weakened considerably the forces of the Marshals Suchet and Soult; but as these generals were only required to retard the advance of the enemy into the South of France, Napoleon hoped that with the remaining forces they would be able to effect this object. Besides, in accordance with prior orders, they had sent to Bordeaux, Toulouse, Montpellier, and Nîmes, skeleton battalions, into which the conscripts of these departments, as they were hastily raised, equipped and armed, were drafted. It is true that hostilities having taken us by surprise there as on other points, before the anticipated month of April, there were, instead of 60,000 men, scarcely 20,000 in the four depôts. Such as they were, however, in our extreme danger they were not to be despised.

After having given sufficient care to the creation of these forces, Napoleon turned his thoughts to the best way of employing them. Although at the first demonstration of the enemy towards Belgium, he might have supposed that their principal efforts would be directed to that quarter, still, since the passage of the Rhine at Bâle, he had no longer a doubt as to the intended course of the invasion. He saw that though the corps of Blucher was advancing from Mayence on Metz, in a north-easterly direction, still that the Allies intended to bear down on the east of France with the main body of their army, turn the defences, and march through Béfort, Langres, and Troyes on Paris. Napoleon made his preparations accordingly.

He ordered Marshals Marmont and Victor, who had just left the fortresses, to march along the range of the Vosges, and contest, as long, as possible with the enemy, the passage of these mountains, as he wished to force their ranks, or out-flank them at Béfort, in order to come down on Epinal afterwards, to oppose the column that was advancing to the eastern frontier. All those who were being drilled for the Young Guard at Metz, were to be concentered at Epinal, under the command of Marshal Ney. The Old Guard, that had at first been sent on towards Belgium, now received orders to retrace their steps in the direction of Chalon-sur-Maine, and take up a position at Langres. Napoleon only left in Belgium the Roguet division, and even that was to remain only until General Decaen could combine the elements of a *corps d'armée*. The greatest efforts of the Allies being directed to

this side, Napoleon did not wish to leave there more than the forces indispensably necessary to oppose and retard the progress of the enemy that was advancing from the north.

In consequence of these orders, the corps of Marshals Marmont, Victor, Ney, Mortier, comprising at most 60,000 men, occupying the space between Epinal and Langres, along the heights that separate Franche-Comté from Burgundy, were to dispute with the invading masses, on the east, the entrance of the valleys of the Mâine, the Aube, and the Seine; whilst Napoleon, with the troops that were being equipped at Paris, and those that were arriving from Spain, was to come to their assistance and give them the support of his presence. If Blucher, whose mission was to anticipate events, should arrive from the north-east, and advance from Metz to Paris, whilst Schwarzenberg should arrive at the same point by Langres and Troyes, Napoleon was not without resources against this new peril. Macdonald with the 11th and 5th corps, fused into one, and with the 2nd cavalry, amounting in all to 15,000 men, was to abandon the Low Countries, to keep close to Blucher, who had entered Metz, then to fall back on Châlons-sur-Maine, and join Napoleon, who after having thrown himself on Schwarzenberg, would fall back on Blucher, supplying numerical weakness by activity, daring, and energy; in a word, doing as well as he could, carrying the same spirit into the battle-field that presided in his government—despair. Fortune pours so many favours not alone upon the brave, but on the obstinate who persevere, and who force her to be kind at any price! Thus the conqueror who had led 650,000 men into Russia, after having left 100,000 in Italy, and 300,000 in Spain, had now at his command, to resist an European combination, about 60,000 soldiers, stationed between Epinal and Langres, 15,000 falling back from Cologne to Namur, 20,000 or 30,000 ready for duty in front of Paris, and perhaps 20,000 coming from the Pyrenees! This was all that remained of his immense armies, and independent of number, what shall we say of quality? Some untrained boys, unarmed, unclothed, drafted into the ranks with some old soldiers, worn out with fatigue; but all, both young and old, having French blood in their veins; and these, led by the genius of Napoleon, were going to fight for their native land against a world in arms, and, as we shall soon see, they performed prodigies of valour!

We must enumerate amongst the means of defence, the army assembled on the Rhone. The enemy having shown an intention of advancing to Geneva, and, as in that case, should Prince Eugene be conquered in Italy, they would be able to debouch by Savoy, it was absolutely necessary to provide for the defence of Lyons. Within the great arc of a circle, which Napoleon was about to describe round Paris, manœuvring between the two invading columns, he could certainly run from Metz to Dijon, but he could not extend his arm to Lyons without leaving the capital exposed to an attack either through Autun and Auxerre, or through Moulins and Nevers. Consequently Napoleon ordered Augereau, already no doubt very much fatigued,

but conserving some remains of energy and talent, to address the people, to assemble at Lyons the skeleton regiments, the conscripts, the National Guards, and to unite these with the 10,000 that Suchet would send him from Roussillon. If this old soldier of the Revolution understood his mission, he was to throw back upon Geneva and Chambéry that portion of the Allies who should have made an attempt on Lyon; then, freed from these assailants, he was to remount the Saône by Maçon, Châlons, Gray, and attack in the rear the main body of the army, invading Burgundy. Many circumstances might arise that would furnish him an opportunity of rendering immense services to France.

Thus, in a position apparently desperate, Napoleon did not despair, and his great mind never appeared less dejected or richer in resources. Whilst he hurried on with so much activity the completion of his preparations, he had besides political measures to take, in order to combine the moral with the material means at his command. After having left the members of the Legislative Corps so long idle at Paris, he had at length resolved to assemble them. He wished to make use of this body to awaken public opinion, to turn it again in his favour, and if they could not do this, at least to stir up a general feeling about the danger of France, now threatened with a fearful disaster.

There happened, on this occasion, what had happened frequently before, and which will happen frequently again, that opinion, restricted for a time in its expression, becomes afterwards more intense and more tempestuous in its manifestations. Authorities that would not permit the expression of public opinion, when this expression was harmless, and might even have been useful, have been obliged to suffer it inopportunely, and at a moment when, instead of criticisms, they stood in need of unconditional devotedness. Another inconvenience attendant on these tardy manifestations is, that the one party is incapable of uttering the truth, the other of hearing it; and that instead of being an assistance, this truth becomes a source of danger, and assumes instead of a counsel, the form of a threat.

The members of the Legislative Corps having come up to Paris with hearts imbued with the sentiments prevailing in their provinces, that lay desolated by the effects of conscription, requisitions, and the arbitrary measures of the prefects, who sometimes imposed taxes of their own free will, sometimes drove into exile the rich father who refused to allow his son to join the guards, or seized the granary which the poor labourer had hidden in the wood. To these real afflictions, which were neither an invention, nor a party cry, were added exaggerated notions, if such could be exaggerated, of what was passing in our armies, and these ideas were prevalent on every side, and even amongst members of the Government. Recitals, in which no circumstance was softened, were heard in all directions, of the misfortunes of the last campaign, the sufferings of our soldiers, who were left dying on the roads of Saxony and Franconia, the frightful ravages made by typhus on the Rhine, and the not less horrible calamities of the Spanish war. Sympathy for these woes was heightened when it was known how easily they might have been

averted. Although the public did not know that there had been a day at Prague, when a glorious peace might have been concluded, and that through a culpable obstinacy the propitious moment had been allowed to pass (this was the secret of Napoleon and M. de Bassano, who were interested in not proclaiming it, and of M. de Caulaincourt, who was too faithful a subject to reveal it); everybody was persuaded that if peace was not concluded, it was the fault of Napoleon, that the Allies had always been willing to make peace with him, that it was he who had never wished to make it with them. And now the inverse was true, now Europe, emboldened by success, after having vainly wished for peace, no longer desired it, and Napoleon now wishing for peace could not obtain it. The public made no distinction between one period and another. They accused Napoleon of a passed fault which he would never have repeated; they accused when they ought to have sustained him. Sad and fatal example of too-long concealed truth! It would be better, we repeat, to acquaint a people with facts at the time they happen, for they then experience at the proper time the impressions which such information is naturally destined to produce, but by delaying the intelligence we call up sentiments inopportunely, at a moment that ought to be occupied with different feelings. And so, the French people ought to have been indignant six months before the period of which we speak, and at this moment they ought to have held their peace and afforded Napoleon their support. They did exactly the contrary. And such is the baseness of the human heart, that those who had appeared most humble and most dazzled by the glory of the empire, now, that its prestige was passing away, were the least reserved in their condemnation.

A month passed at Paris in the midst of idleness, injurious reports, and vexatious excitement was not calculated to shed a calming influence over the members of the Legislative Corps. Every member of the Government had perceived their temper of mind and were troubled in consequence. It would be no easy task to change them. This Government, so accustomed to dealing with soldiers, displayed when it became necessary to deal with men, all the awkwardness and barbarity of despotism. To the Duke of Rovigo, as amongst his police duties, had always been confided the task of influencing the clergy or the members of the Legislative Corps as happened at the time of the council. To guess what might be the family necessities of one, or the desires of the *protegés* of another, and to satisfy these wishes by the presentation of places, or by other less avowable means, was a duty that the Duke de Rovigo discharged with an unscrupulous facility and a soldier-like frankness, which in those days supplied the place of independence of character. But if this mode of proceeding succeeded with some individuals, happily, with the greater number more noble means were needed, especially when the public mind was unusually disturbed. Thus, the enlightened servants of the government seeing clearly that in the present circumstances a few personal favours would have no weight, had said that the Duke of Rovigo ought to be pre-

vented from interfering in the affairs of the legislative corps. M. de Sémonville especially, the enemy of the Duke of Rovigo, whose place he was anxious to obtain, succeeded, through his friend M. de Bassano, in having this advice given to Napoleon, and Napoleon, whom the frankness of the Duke of Rovigo offended, told him very quickly that he was not to meddle again in the affairs of the great legislative bodies.

It was true that superficial means would no longer suffice when placed in juxta-position with the long-suppressed sentiments of afflicted France. Still, in the absence of these means, where was the person who could employ honest persuasion? The clever people who thought the skill of the Duke of Rovigo savoured of vulgarity, what resource had they to offer? Alas! none, for there is no skill that can prevail against mournful truths, universally and profoundly felt. It is true that a president, possessed of good manners and accustomed to act on the feelings of men, enjoying at the same time the confidence of his colleagues, might have obtained some influence over them, and shown them that, though justified in being angry at the past, they ought at the actual time to aid the Government with all their might, and by a decisive and patriotic effort repulse the foreign invaders. But, in order to indemnify the Duke of Massa, who had been deprived of his portfolio for the advantage of M. Mole, the Legislative Corps had been deprived of all participation in the choice of its president, and the Duke of Massa had been forced upon them. He was, no doubt, a worthy and upright magistrate, worthy of all respect, but grown infirm, not acquainted with any of the members of the Legislative Corps, not known by any of them, and displeasing to them because his mere presence was one of the last examples of the capricious whims of a despotism to which the ruin of France was attributed.

This president then could do nothing to overcome the difficulties of the position, and make his colleagues feel that far above the right of complaining of their own government, ought to be the duty of combining against the enemies of France. If honest and conscientious ministers could have appeared before the assembly, and in a dignified manner made the necessary avowals, beseeching all to silence their resentment and listen only to the dictates of patriotism, it would have been possible to dispense with these suspicious means that deal only with individuals, but in the Legislative Corps all remained silent, the ministers as well as the representatives. A government orator, a secondary and irresponsible person, pronounced a prepared harangue before the legislators, who replied by a harangue of the same kind, both fulfilling a vain formality void of interest. These proceedings presented no means of allaying public feeling, of speaking to the people, of pointing out their duty, and winning their attention and credence. It will, perhaps, be said that a free assembly instead of yielding assistance would have entailed embarrassments; we shall see by what happened whether a free assembly could have been more injurious than this enslaved and degraded Legislative Corps.

The members of the Legislative Corps assembled at Paris, their hearts filled with vexation, with alarm, with bitter sentiments of every kind, which would have needed vent, but which must be suppressed, when Napoleon opened the Legislative Assembly in person on the 19th of December. Amid a glacial silence, he read the following address, simply, nobly dictated, as everything was that emanated directly from himself.

"SENATORS, PRIVY COUNSELLORS, DEPUTIES—

"Splendid victories have shed glory over the French arms in this campaign; unexampled defections have rendered these victories useless; everything has turned against us. France itself would be in danger were it not for the energy and union of Frenchmen.

"In these perilous circumstances, my first thought was to summon you around me. My heart has need of the presence and affection of my subjects.

"I have never been elated by prosperity. Adversity would find me beyond its reach.

"I have often accorded peace to nations that had lost everything. From one portion of my conquests, I have created thrones for kings, who have betrayed me.

"I have conceived and executed great designs for the prosperity and happiness of the human race.

"A monarch and a father I understand how much peace adds to the security of thrones and the happiness of families. Negotiations have been commenced with the allied powers. I have adhered to the preliminary basis that they presented. I had hoped that before the opening of this session, the Congress of Manheim would have assembled; but fresh delays, no ways attributable to France, have deferred this movement so ardently desired by all.

"I have ordered that all the original documents in the portfolios at my office of foreign affairs, shall be laid before you. You will appoint a commission to take cognizance of them. The speeches of my Council will let you know my wishes on this subject.

"Nothing, on my part, opposes the re-establishment of peace. I know and I participate in the sentiments of the French, I say emphatically the French, for there is no Frenchman who would desire peace at the expense of honour.

"It is with regret that I demand from this generous people new sacrifices, but they are commanded by the noblest and dearest interests. I have been obliged to reinforce my armies by numerous levies; nations can only negotiate with security when they deploy all their military strength. An increase in the revenue becomes indispensable. What my Minister of Finance will propose to you is conformable to the system of finance I have established. We will meet every difficulty without having recourse to a loan, which gnaws into the future, and without paper money, the great enemy of social order.

"I am satisfied with the sentiments which under these circumstances my Italian subjects have manifested.

"Denmark and Naples have alone remained faithful to my alliance.

"The Republic of the United States of America continues with success the war against England.

"I have recognized the neutrality of the nineteen Swiss cantons.

"SENATORS, PRIVY COUNCILLORS, DEPUTIES FROM THE DEPARTMENTS TO THE LEGISLATIVE CORPS—

"You are the natural organs of this throne: it belongs to you to give an example of energy, that will render our generation glorious in the eyes of those yet to come. Let them not say of us, 'They have sacrificed the primary interests of the country; they have recognized the laws that England tried in vain, during four centuries, to impose on France.'

"My people cannot apprehend that the policy of their Emperor would ever betray the national glory. For my part, I feel confident that Frenchmen will ever be worthy of themselves and of me."

In this speech, Napoleon announced that the documents relative to the Frankfort negotiations should be laid before the Assembly, these negotiations which seemed, no one knew why, completely broken off.

He hoped this communication would produce a useful result, the only one that could be hoped from the meeting of the Legislative Corps—it would be proof that he wished for peace, that he had frankly accepted the conditions as they had been laid down at Frankfort, and if this peace was not already signed, the fault was not attributable to him, but to the allied powers. A declaration from the Legislative Corps to this effect, might remedy, if not the exhaustion of the country, at least the general feeling of mistrust, and infuse into the minds of the people a certain amount of zeal, by persuading them that it was not to the ambition of the Emperor they were about to sacrifice themselves once again, but to the necessity of defending and saving themselves. However, before dissipating the distrust of the country, it would have been necessary to dissipate that of the Legislative Corps, which could only be done by very great frankness. M. de Caulaincourt, who had nothing to fear from this frankness, advised it strongly. But Napoleon, anxious to conceal many truths, could not follow this counsel. If the single report of M. de Saint Aignan were laid before the House, every one would have seen there that M. de Metternich had expressly recommended *not to act as at Prague*, that is to say, to allow the only moment in which peace could be concluded, to pass unprofitted of, which proved that at Prague they might have made peace and did not. If, moreover, they had produced the letter of M. de Bassano, of the 16th November, it would be evident that at the very time the Frankfort propositions were made, that the French Cabinet, instead of taking the Allies at their word, had replied in an equivocal and ironical manner, and that it was not until the 2nd December that a formal acceptation had been given; and though the public were not aware how fatal the loss of this month had been, they would certainly have suspected that in losing it, precious time had been lost, for M. de Metternich was as cold and evasive in his despatch of the 10th of December, as he had been confiding and pressing in the first.

Frankness might then entail serious revelations; but in addressing the representatives of the country, for the purpose of obtaining their support, it would be necessary at least to speak to them frankly, acknowledging past faults, and claiming credit for present sincerity, which the letter of the 2nd December put beyond doubt, and this in order to obtain from the Legislative Corps a formal declaration that the Government wished for peace, wished it on honourable terms, but did wish it.

Napoleon was willing that the communications made to the Senate should be more extensive than those made to the Legislative Corps, which were of a very restricted nature. The report of M. de Saint Aignan, for example, was to be presented, with alterations, that would efface all allusion to what had taken place at Prague. The letters of the 16th November, and of the 2nd December, were both produced, for it would be impossible in producing the document of the 2nd December, to repress that of the 16th November, as the one referred to the other. As to the mode of proceeding, it was agreed that the Senate and the Legislative Corps should each nominate a commission of five members, and that this commission should repair to the High Chancellor Cambacérès, who would lay before them the appointed documents. Meanwhile, the Senate and the Legislative Corps were busy choosing commissioners to receive the communications of the Government.

The Senate appointed high personages, who, without being partizans, were incapable at this moment of committing the slightest imprudence. The Senate appointed Messrs. de Fontanes, de Tallyrand, de Saint Marsan, de Barbé-Marbois, de Beurnonville. These names revealed neither hostility nor complaisance. It was quite different with the Legislative Corps. The Government had indirectly insinuated certain preferences, but the Assembly took no notice of these intimations. This body had hitherto been too little engaged in politics to be divided into parties, which would have served to declare each member's political opinions distinctly, and was now groping for commissioners, as it were, in the dark, and were obliged to recur to repeated scrutinies to find out what it was they exactly wished. In the first place, they rejected the candidates favoured by Government, then, after mature reflection, they appointed distinguished, independent men, who enjoyed, without having caballed for it, the esteem of their colleagues. These were M. Lainé, a celebrated Bordeaux lawyer, who was formerly an ardent revolutionist, but had afterwards adopted more moderate opinions. He was honest but impassioned; he was possessed of eloquence, studied, but brilliant and dignified. M. Raynouard, a literary man of considerable reputation, author of the tragedy of The Templers. He was warm-hearted, intellectual, and sincere. M. Maine de Birau, a man of contemplative mind, devoted to philosophic studies, one of the *savants* that Napoleon accused of ideaology. And lastly, Messrs. de Flaugergues and Gallois; these were less known than the others, but they were men of considerable intellect and decided partizans of political liberty. All, on the eve of a struggle with the

Government, were placed, without perceiving it, on the road to *royalism* (we mean by this denomination a decided inclination for the Bourbons, with laws more or less liberal), but they had not yet arrived at the term, at least the three first named, who, amongst the five commissioners, alone at that time enjoyed a certain reputation.

These selections having been made, each commission, headed by its president, sought an interview with the high chancellor. The commissioners, deputed by the Senate, were admitted first—that is to say, on the 23rd of December. The communications were made to them by M. de Caulaincourt himself. They listened to everything, said nothing, and after having heard the letters of the 16th of November and the 2nd December read, they did not entertain the slightest doubt as to the error that had been committed in not accepting purely, and simply, and instantaneously, the Frankfort propositions. In fact, such men as MM. de Talleyrand and de Fontanes perceived at once that it was the letter of the 2nd of December, which ought to have been written on the 2nd of November. M. de Fontanes was deputed to present to the Senate the report of the proceedings of the senatorial commission. It seems a strange contradiction that the communications prepared for the most experienced diplomatists were far from partaking of a serious character, but the reason was simply because they were a mere matter of form. The deputies of the Legislative Corps received the communications intended for them on the 24th, and this communication intended for persons far less important than those for whom the first was drawn up, was destined to produce far more serious results.

As if those who had devised these communications wished as much as possible to detract from the importance of the second, it was not the minister himself, but one of his subordinates, M. d'Hauterive—certainly a man of considerable merit—who was deputed to receive the members of the Legislative Corps, and to lay before them a report of the negotiations. These commissioners, like those from the Senate, were received at the high chancellor's. Instead of public personages of high rank, and coldly attentive, there now appeared men whose faces were unknown amongst the great—men anxious for information, impassioned, listening to what was told them, but desiring and demanding more. The report being read, they asked a fresh reading, and it was not refused. Their first impression was a species of astonishment. Some minutes before, they were all convinced that if war still prevailed it was owing to the obstinacy of Napoleon; and yet, not having before them the documents relative to the negotiations at Prague, having only the Frankfort acts, the propositions entrusted to M. de Saint Aignan, the reply of M. de Bassano of the 16th of November, that of M. de Caulaincourt of the 2nd of December, they were forced to admit that on the last-named occasion Napoleon had desired peace. Had these gentlemen been a little more accustomed to diplomatic transactions, and had they known what had taken place in European cabinets from the 16th of November to the 2nd of December, and how the time lost by us had been actively employed by our

enemies, they would have perceived the error that had been committed in not binding the Allied powers by the immediate acceptation of their propositions. However, perceiving between the letter of the 16th of November and that of the 2nd December a positive advance in the way to peace, they were desirous of seeing a still further progress. They wished the Emperor to bind himself solemnly to make every necessary sacrifice to obtain peace; besides, they thought the proposed bases of the natural frontiers very vague—for in Holland, on the Rhine, in Italy even, there might be many points of contest—therefore the commissioners wished the Emperor should positively state to them what he would yield, and this they required in order that they might afterwards repeat the statement to the Legislative Corps, that is to say to Europe, and that then all parties should be bound, Napoleon as well as the Allies. This was, in their opinion, the only means of acting on the public mind, and inducing the people to think favourably of the Emperor's designs by proving to them that the efforts required of the French people were not to be expended in the attainment of unwise conquests, but in conserving the natural limits of France. M. Raynouard, with all the ardour of a southern temperament, proposed the following form of address:—

"SIRE,—You swore at your coronation to maintain the natural and necessary limits of France, which are the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees: we call upon you to be faithful to your oath, and we are willing to shed the last drop of our blood to aid you in fulfilling your obligations. But having observed your oath and secured our frontiers, neither France nor you will be longer bound by any motive, either of honour or of glory, and you will then be able to sacrifice everything to obtain the blessings of peace and to secure the interests of humanity."

This truly original document, which was a demand for peace under the appearance of a demand for war, met the approbation of all the commissioners; but for the moment they retired in order to have time for a little reflection, and to devise at their leisure the best mode of addressing the Legislative Corps, France, in short, all Europe.

M. d'Hauterive, who beneath a grave and rather pedantic exterior concealed an infinity of tact, made every effort to win the good graces of the different members of the commission and to induce them to act with reserve. But when a government has recourse to publicity, it is better to submit unreservedly and trust to the national good sense. But this cannot be done with safety, excepting where this national good sense has been trained by a long participation in public affairs, and it must be admitted that to make an appeal for the first time to such a tribunal, in delicate and dangerous circumstances, is running a great risk. It is plain that the Government did not wish to tell everything nor allow everything to be told to the commissioners; but then it would have been better not to have assembled them, and yet how was it possible to demand such great sacrifices from the people, without addressing to them one single word? It is not whilst maintaining such a silence that a government has a right to demand

from a people their last crown and their last man. Those who fall into the habit of making half revelations to a people concerning their affairs, ought to ask themselves the question, whether a day will not arrive when everything must be made public, and whether this day of reckoning will not be precisely that when it would be desirable that the revelations should be of the least painful character.

M. d'Hauterive took especial trouble in endeavouring to persuade M. Lainé who appeared the most influential man of the commission. He found in him, not a secret and zealous partizan of the house of Bourbon, as one would have been inclined to expect from the previous conduct of this illustrious personage, seeking to embarrass the actual government, in the hope of serving the future dynasty, but an honest man, deeply affected by the misfortunes of France and the tyrannical yoke under which she was bowed down. With regard to external policy, M. d'Hauterive found M. Lainé disposed, like his colleagues, to demand an explicit declaration of what sacrifices the Emperor was resolved to make for peace, as this was, in his opinion, the only means of obtaining from France a last effort, if even at this price she was still capable of one, so exhausted were her resources. M. d'Hauterive, profiting of the advantage that a *tête-à-tête* with a man of intelligence and sincerity always affords, endeavoured to persuade M. Lainé that it was impossible to lay before the commissioners a plan of negotiation because the Government could not publicly declare what they would yield or what they would not yield, for that would be telling their secret to an enemy who did not reveal his; neither could they present an *ultimatum*, that being a proceeding employed only at the termination of a negotiation when it became important to put an end to designedly-prolonged parleying, and when those who used it were in a position to enforce the imperative language in which it was couched.

Enlightened by these practical observations, M. Lainé promised to satisfy his colleagues on this point, and kept his word. In fact, after very warm discussions, the commissioners abandoned the demand of having laid before them a detailed enumeration of the sacrifices the Emperor was willing to make for peace, but they expressly declared that France would not recede from her natural frontiers, but she claimed nothing beyond; and these sentiments being sincerely declared, it became the duty of the Allies to explain themselves definitely on the Frankfort bases, which they had proposed, and which had been formally accepted by M. de Caulaincourt in his letter of the 2nd of December. This point being settled, they turned their attention to the subject of the home policy, and then the most violent expressions were launched against the despotism under which the empire groaned. Upon this subject each individual had serious grievances to allege: taxes levied without lawful authority, horrible vexations in the administration of the laws touching conscription, insupportable abuses in collecting contributions in kind, illegal arrests, arbitrary detentions, &c. As regarded these complaints, the facts were as numerous as varied, and at the very moment when the government stood in need of the utmost devotedness from the nation, the people were in a position to tell the governing authorities, that for the patriot citizen there were

two things equally sacred—his native land and the laws of his country. His native land, that portion of the earth where he was called into life, and which he is bound to defend against every invader; the laws beneath whose shelter he lives, through which he is made conscious of a public authority, and whose rigorous observance he has a right to demand. His native land and the laws of his country are two sacred objects in the estimation of the true patriot. Every citizen, in devoting himself to the one, establishes for himself the right to inquire into the administration of the others; every citizen has a right to say to a government that demands from him great sacrifices: "I will not help you to drive a foreign foe from my country, if the reward of my exertions is to be oppression from a home despotism."

All the commissioners were unanimous on these points, and came to the resolution of drawing up a moderate, but decisive declaration of their opinions. When the communications made by the Government were concluded, it became the duty of the commission to make out a report for the Legislative Corps, after which, they were to propose an address to the Emperor. To M. Lainé was confided the task of drawing up this report, and he did so in a spirit conformable to the opinions entertained by the Commissioners. The report stated that at Frankfort, overtures of peace had been made to France, having for bases her natural frontiers, that on the 16th of November, France had favourably received this overture, and proposed a Congress at Manheim; that upon a second communication from M. Metternich, who did not think the acceptation of the natural frontiers had been sufficiently explicit, France formally accepted them on the 2nd of December, and that these became thenceforth, the bases on which negotiations were carried on. The report said further that it was a duty the Allies owed to France and to themselves, to adhere to what they had proposed, and that France, on her part, ought to shed the last drop of her blood for the maintenance of conditions so accepted. The report added that two objects of the highest consideration to every people ought to be, the integrity of the country and the maintenance of the laws, and on this subject the report laid before the Emperor in respectful terms and with entire confidence in his justice, an exposé of some acts of the public authorities of which the people had reason to complain. The tone of the report throughout was sincere, but grave and dignified.

The commissioners assembled on the 28th to submit the projected report, for as yet it was only a project, to the high chancellor and M. d'Hauterive.

The high chancellor, though believing the observations of the commissioners to be very just, was however alarmed at the effect this report might produce on all Europe, and still more on Napoleon himself. In the eyes of Europe it would pass for an act of indirect hostility to the Government, at a moment when the most perfect union was needed between the executive and the people; with regard to Napoleon, it would offend him, and provoke acts of violence, the consequences of which, at such a time, might be very disagreeable.

The prudent high chancellor might have been right on these two points, but why had the representatives of the country been granted only this day, this day so long deferred, to give utterance to truths that must have found expression? Still, though the commissioners uttered complaints of the gravest nature, it might have been wiser to defer them. The high chancellor endeavoured to persuade them of this, and his fine and impressive countenance, well calculated to give weight to his prudent counsels, produced some impression on his auditors. Many changes were agreed to. M. d'Hauterive obtained one especially of great importance, taking good care not to avow the motive that prompted him to solicit the concession. The letters of the 16th of November and the 2nd of December, had been inserted in the report, and M. d'Hauterive feared that the public, better informed than the commissioners, might ultimately discover the real error—the too late acceptance of the Frankfort bases. He assigned as a reason for the proposed alteration that it might involve disagreeable consequences to publish documents touching a negotiation that had scarcely commenced. The copies of the letters in the report were consequently suppressed. Lastly, the high chancellor succeeded in having the complaints against the home government reduced to a few moderate phrases. In short, after having spoken of the declaration to be made to the allied powers, and of the defensive measures to be taken if this declaration were not attended to, the report added: "It is, according to the spirit of our institutions, the duty of the Government to propose the means it believes most prompt and most sure to repulse the enemy, and establish peace on a durable basis. These means will be efficacious, if the French are convinced that the Government no longer aspires to any glory but that of peace; these means will be sufficient, if the French are convinced that their blood will be shed only to defend their native land and well-administered laws."

"It appears then indispensable to your commissioners, that at the same time that the Government shall propose the most prompt measures for the safety of the state, his Majesty should be petitioned to maintain the entire and steady execution of the laws that secure to individual Frenchmen the rights of liberty, of personal safety, of property, and to the nation at large, the free exercise of political rights. This guarantee has appeared to your commissioners the most efficacious means of restoring to Frenchmen the energy necessary for the defence of their country, &c., &c."

Notwithstanding the extreme moderation of these phrases, the chancellor made fresh efforts to get them suppressed. M. de Caulaincourt lent his exertions, but neither could induce men indignant against the home administration, to abstain from so moderate a manifestation of their feelings, particularly as they might not have another opportunity of doing so, for it was not probable that the Government, which now in the hour of its defeat appealed to them, would be likely to do so, should the day of distress be succeeded by one of triumph. This was their excuse for a manifestation which, if it were ill-timed, was the fault of those who had afforded only this opportu-

nity for the expression of their feelings, and who gave them little hope of another. The commissioners were certainly told they would be listened to another time on this subject, but they did not believe it, and had good reasons for their mistrust.

On the 29th of December, the Legislative Corps being resolved into a private committee, M. Lainé read his report, which was listened to with religious attention and unanimously approved. M. Lainé, at the conclusion of the report, recommended the drawing up of an address to the Emperor in the same spirit. It was decided by a majority of 223 votes out of 254, that the report of the commission should be printed solely for the members of the Legislative Corps, in order that they may reflect on it, and vote for the proposed address after mature deliberation. From this moment, publicity was assured to the words of M. Lainé, especially amongst foreign nations, by whom they ought never to have been heard.

When the report was laid before Napoleon, he burst into violent anger on reading it, and exclaimed that he was insulted at the very moment when he stood most in need of support. He immediately summoned the privy council, and asked the ministers, with the air and tone of a man who had already taken his resolution, whether the sittings of the Legislative Corps ought to be any longer allowed. He pointed out not only the danger of allowing such a report, as that of M. Lainé's to be published, but the still greater danger of having within the walls of the capital an assembly that, at a dangerous crisis, at the approach of the enemy for example, might be guilty of some factious or imprudent manifestation, which would infallibly be attended with fatal effects. Sad and wide-seeing foresight, by which it would seem that Napoleon, piercing the future, already read his own history on the page of destiny, but this foresight came too late, and was incapable of supplying a remedy. How could Napoleon now prevent that this report had come into existence, and had been read before an audience of hundreds! How prevent that the Legislative Corps either dissolved or adjourned, should remain at Paris, ready to combine spontaneously for the prosecution of the most dangerous schemes! How many legislative bodies have been dissolved, and have been found at a dangerous crisis more formidable than if they had continued their legitimate sittings. Be this as it may, Napoleon asked his ministers whether it would not be better immediately to adjourn the Legislative Corps; in the first place, to prevent the members putting into execution the sentiments embodied in M. Lainé's report, and, secondly, to suspend the sittings of this body during a war that might only be terminated beneath the walls of Paris itself.

The chancellor, Cambacérès, combatted this proposition with his ordinary sagacity. The report, he said, was undoubtedly warm, and even factious, but it was done, and nothing could prevent its publication. Even should the Emperor succeed in preventing the publication in France, he could not forbid it in foreign countries. The adjournment of the Legislative Corps would be a more serious circumstance than the report itself, for the public would infallibly attribute to this

body sentiments much more hostile than those they really entertained. As to the annoyance that its sitting during the approaching campaign might cause, nobody could of course affirm that the members might not commit some imprudence, but that was an annoyance that could be provided for when the time came, without anticipating it by an ill-judged outburst. In fact, to dissolve the Legislative Corps, would be to proclaim to the world a disunion between the legislative bodies; it would be to declare that a rupture existed between France and the Emperor.

Each of the ministers adopted the sentiments of the chancellor, each thought the adjournment would work more mischief than the report itself. But touching the annoyances that might arise from the assembling of the Legislative Corps during the campaign, every body hesitated to give an opinion, and yet that was the point on which Napoleon's foresight rendered him most solicitous; for admitting the past evil to be irremediable, he wished to provide against the future, and he pressed each of the ministers to enlighten him on this subject. Perceiving that each when he came to this part of his discourse hesitated, Napoleon interrupted the discussion and put an end to it, by a few sharp, decisive words: "You see it clearly," he said, "you all agree in recommending me moderation, but no one ventures to assure me that the deputies will not take advantage of some disastrous day, of which there are so many in war, to make spontaneously, or at the instigation of some factious leader, an insurrectionary movement, and I cannot endure such a doubt. Any thing is less dangerous than such a possibility." Without listening to further remonstrance he signed the decree which adjourned on the following day—the 31st of December—the Legislative Corps, and he ordered the Duke of Rovigo to seize at the printing office and elsewhere every copy of M. Lainé's report, a report which has since become so famous.

The decree for adjournment being presented to the Legislative Corps produced amongst the members a profound sensation. In a moment it converted into enemies two hundred and fifty persons, who before that were profoundly submissive to the Government, and only meant to give utterance to a positive fact, useful to reveal, which was that the local government, imitating the conduct of the head of the empire, committed the most arbitrary acts, acts which constituted an actual tyranny. To the eyes of the general public, matters wore a still worse aspect. They believed that very serious things had been said in the Legislative Corps, and that most important revelations had taken place. The enemies, who were anxious for the overthrow of the Imperial Government were not slow to circulate a report that the Emperor had had an open rupture with the public bodies, that they had wished to induce him to make peace, that he had refused, and that consequently the torrents of blood that were doomed to flow were attributable to him alone. All this was true of past times, but was false at the actual moment, and was the idea most injurious to the Emperor's popularity that could take possession of the public mind.

This outburst, which, with a ruler of a different temperament to

Napoleon, would have finished with an article in the *Moniteur*, had, thanks to his constitutional irritability, far more deplorable consequences. On the following day (the 1st of January) he was to receive the Legislative Corps with the other public bodies. He seemed anxious to meet them, as if he feared to lose the opportunity of giving vent to the vexation with which he was oppressed. After having received the customary compliments he stepped forward abruptly, stood in the midst of the members of the Legislative Corps, and with a loud voice and sparkling eyes, spoke to them in language familiar even to vulgarity, but expressive, proud, original, sometimes true, but more often imprudent; bearing, in short, all the characteristics of the anger of a great man. He told them he had called on them to do good and they had done evil; to proclaim the unity of sentiment that subsisted between France and her monarch, and they had hastened to declare a disunion; that two battles lost in Champagne would not have been so injurious as what they had just done. Then apostrophising them vehemently, he said: "What do you wish for? You wish to seize on power, but what would you do with it? Which of you could wield it? Have you forgotten the Constituante, the Legislative Assembly, the Convention? Would you be more successful than they? Would you not all finish your career on the scaffold, like Guadet, Vergniaud, Danton? And besides, what does France need at this moment? It is not an assembly of deputies, it is not orators—it is a general. Is there one amongst you? And then, where are your credentials? France knows me—does she know you? She has twice chosen me for her chief by several million votes; and you, in the restricted space of the departments, she has elected you by some hundred voices, to come and vote for the laws that I, and not you, make. I look for your titles and I do not find them. *The throne in itself is only a frame-work of wood, covered over with velvet.* The actual throne is a man, and I am that man, with my indomitable will, my inflexible temper, and my wide-spread fame. It is I who can save France, and it is not you. You complain of abuses in the administration; in what you say there is some truth, and a great deal of falsehood. M. Raynouard has asserted that Marshal Massena seized the house of a private individual for the use of his staff. (This circumstance had occurred at Marseilles, where Marshal Massena had been Envoy Extraordinary.) M. Raynouard has lied. The Marshal took possession for a short time of a vacant house, and afterwards indemnified the owner for the use. It is not so that a marshal bowed down with years and covered with glory ought to be spoken of. If you had complaints to make you ought to have waited another opportunity, which I would myself have procured you, and then with some of my privy counsellors, perhaps with myself personally, you could have discussed your grievances, and I would have applied remedies where there was any reasonable grounds for complaint. But the explanation ought to have taken place in private, *for it is in the retirement of home and not in presence of the public that we wash our dirty linen.* But instead of that, you have bespattered me with mire. I am, I would have you

to know, a man whom you may kill, but whom you shall not insult with impunity. M. Lainé is a wicked man, in correspondence with the Bourbons, through the agency of the advocate Desèze. I shall keep my eye on him, and on those whom I believe capable of criminal conspiracies. As to the rest, I distrust you all together. The eleven-twelfths of you are well-meaning, but you allow yourselves to be led by designing men. Return into your departments; tell France that no matter what might be said to be contrary, that the war is made against her not less than against me, and that she is now called on to defend, not my person, but her own national existence. I shall place myself at the head of the army, I shall repulse the enemy, I shall conclude peace, no matter what sacrifice it may cost what you call my ambition. I shall again summon you around me, I shall order your report to be printed, and you will be astonished yourselves that you had ever addressed me in such language and under such circumstances."

This ill-timed speech, which if it contained some truth, contained still more falsehood, (for if it was true that Napoleon alone could save France, it was equally true that he was the cause of her calamities, and if one alleged grievance was incorrect or exaggerated, a multitude of others could be proved that were unjust and insupportable) confounded all who heard it, and soon obtained a deplorable publicity. In fact every one related it after his own fashion, and the consequence was that Napoleon appeared to be opposed by the heretofore submissive representatives of France, that is to say, by France herself. The report of the Legislative Corps published *in extenso* could never have produced so unfortunate a result. It would have been seen in that, that there had been abuses in the home administration, and that the Legislative Corps wished to suppress them; it would have been also perceptible that Napoleon's despotism began to be oppressive to the mass of the citizens, but it would have been also seen that the Legislative Corps wished for peace, wished it on the bases of our natural frontiers, that the Legislative Corps advised the Government not to yield these boundaries, and invited France to rise *en masse*. Such a declaration might well have induced the Government to endure a few censures, very light indeed compared to what they might have been.

Still, it was necessary to appeal to France, to endeavour to stir up her zeal, and Napoleon, for want of the public bodies who were little inclined to fall in with his views, conceived the idea of selecting commissioners extraordinary amongst the senators. He intended to choose the most distinguished personages, either military or civil, and send them into their respective provinces where they were supposed to have most influence, in order that they might facilitate the levy of the conscription, the payment of the taxes, the bringing in of the contributions in kind, the instruction and organization of the military bodies, the departure of the National Guards; in fact, their mission was to accelerate the activity of the Government in every department. In order to carry out these views, they would need be endowed with extraordinary and unlimited powers.

Before their departure, Napoleon wished to see and speak with them. He was touched, it is true, and his emotion communicated to his language an o'er-mastering eloquence.

"I do not fear to acknowledge," he said, "that I have made war too long; I had conceived vast projects, I wished to secure to France the empire of the world. I was mistaken; these projects were not proportioned to the numerical force of our population. I should have been obliged to put them all under arms, and I now perceive that the advancement of society, and the moral and social well-being of a state, is not compatible with the converting an entire people into a nation of soldiers. I ought to expiate the fault I have committed in reckoning too much on my good fortune, and I will expiate it. I will make peace. I will make it on such terms as circumstances command, and this peace shall be mortifying to myself alone. It is I who have deceived myself; it is I who ought to suffer, it is not France. She has not committed any error, she has poured forth her blood for me, she has not refused me any sacrifice. Let her then enjoy the glory of my enterprizes, let her enjoy it unreservedly, I yield it to her.

As to me, I only reserve to myself the honour of displaying a courage difficult to attain, that of renouncing the highest ambition man ever entertained, and of sacrificing for the happiness of my people, projects of greatness that could only be accomplished by efforts that I no longer wish to demand Go, then, gentlemen, announce to your departments that I am about to conclude a peace, that I shall no longer require the blood of Frenchmen for my enterprizes, for myself, as some people have been pleased to say, but for France, and to maintain the integrity of her frontiers. Tell them I only ask the means of expelling a foreign foe from our native land. Tell them that Alsace, Franche-Comté, Navarre, Bearn, are invaded. Tell them that I call on Frenchmen to come to the aid of Frenchmen; that I am willing to negotiate, but will only do so on the frontiers, not in the heart of our provinces, laid waste by a hoard of barbarians. I shall accompany my army both as a general and a soldier. Go, gentlemen, and repeat to all France, the sentiments by which I am animated."

In listening to these generous excuses of genius, acknowledging its errors, a kind of enthusiasm seized these venerable personages who were about setting out for the provinces, to endeavour to awaken the zeal of a dejected people. They crowded round Napoleon, pressed his hands in theirs, giving expression to the profound emotion with which they were seized. The greater part took leave to set off immediately for their destination. Alas! Why did he not address these noble expressions to the Legislative Corps? He would have then seen that truth is the most powerful means of acting on the minds of men, and perhaps far from being obliged to dissolve that assembly, he would have seen the members rise to a man to applaud his sentiments, and call on every Frenchman to follow him to the field of battle.

The aspect of affairs became every moment more threatening, and it became of urgent importance to send as quickly as possible, the remaining national forces to meet the enemy, The allied armies were

crossing our frontiers on every side. General Bubna, who had set out first, after having skirted the opposite side of the Jura, had borne down on Geneva, where there were only a few conscripts to resist the Austrians and restrain a disaffected population. General Jordy, who commanded at Geneva, having died suddenly, the preparations for defence became disorganized, and the Austrians entered the city without striking a blow. The Generals Colleredo and Maurice Liechtenstein, with the light troops and Austrian reserves, after having passed by Berne, had taken their way towards Pontarlier, with the intention of marching through Dole on Auxonne. The corps d'Aloys de Liechtenstein passing in like manner through Pontarlier, was to come down on Besançon to mask that place, whilst General Giulay, traversing Porentruy, was to advance through Montbéliard on Vesoul. Marshal Wrede, with the Bavarians and the Wurtembergers, had thrown bombs into Huningue, attacked Béfort, and sent out cavalry to reconnoitre Colmar. The Prince of Wittgenstein blockaded Strasbourg and Kehl; the Russian and Prussian Guards had remained at Bâle with the allied sovereigns. Such was the distribution of the army of Prince Schwarzenberg after the passage of the Rhine. His project, after he should have crossed the Jura and turned our defences, was to advance with 160,000 men of the old Bohemian army through Franche-Comté, and take up his position on the high grounds of Burgundy and Champagne, whence the Seine, the Aube, and the Marne flow towards Paris, whilst the old army of Silesia, commanded by Blucher, and 60,000 strong, crossing the Rhine at the same time at Mayence, should advance amongst our fortresses without attacking them, leaving the task of blockading them to the troops in the rear. The two invading armies were to unite at the Upper Marne, between Chaumont and Langres, in order to advance *en masse* towards the angle formed by the Marne and the Seine. Blucher, in fact, had on the 1st of January, 1814, crossed the Rhine at three points—Manheim, Mayence, and Coblentz—without meeting any greater resistance than the great army of Prince Schwarzenberg had encountered along the Jura range. Thus the prestige of the inviolability of our frontiers was doomed to be destroyed in many places at the same time.

In fact, it would have been difficult, in the actual state of our forces, to oppose any resistance to this mass of invaders. Along the Jura frontier, where the attack was unexpected, there were no troops stationed; but General Mortier, who had at first been ordered to Belgium with the Old Guard, returned by forced marches from the north to the east, through Rheims, Châlons, Chaumont, and Langres. On the Alsatian frontier, Marshal Victor, with the 2nd infantry and the 5th cavalry corps, was at Strasbourg, where he had scarcely time to give his troops a little rest and incorporate a few conscripts. This corps, which in drawing upon all the depôts in Alsace ought to have furnished thirty-six battalions and three divisions, did not reckon, after having hastily embodied all the disposable conscripts, more than from eight to nine thousand infantry, ill armed and badly clothed. The displacement of our depôts, which had been put in the rear, had

added very considerably to the difficulty of recruiting. However, Marshal Victor had in the 5th cavalry corps nearly four thousand old dragoons of Spain, incomparable soldiers, and moreover deeply irritated against the enemy. At the appearance of the masses that debouched by Bâle, Béfort, and Besançon, the Marshal had avoided encountering them on the way from Colmar to Bâle; he had, on the contrary, fallen back on Saverne, and taken up a position on the Vosges, after having left in Strasbourg about eight thousand conscripts and national guards, under General Broussier, with sufficient supplies. This brave Marshal was visibly disconcerted. However, his noble cavalry had fallen on the Russian and Bavarian squadrons that had advanced against them, had defeated, and put them to the sword.

On the Mayence side, the Duke of Ragusa, on receiving intelligence of the passage of the Rhine, effected on the 1st of January, retreated with the 6th infantry and the 1st cavalry corps, leaving in Mayence the 4th corps, commanded by General Morand, and reduced by typhus fever from 24,000 to 11,000 men. He had been joined on the way by the Durutte division, that had been sent on to Coblentz, and which was cut off from Mayence, where it could not gain admission. The Duke's first impulse was to hasten to Alsace to the assistance of Marshal Victor, but seeing Alsace invaded by the enemy, and almost abandoned by our troops, who had already gained the summit of the Vosges, he had taken up a position on the other side of these mountains, that is to say, on the Sarre and the Moselle, in order to effect a junction with Marshal Victor in the direction of Metz, Nancy, or Luneville. He too had encountered great difficulties in recruiting his corps, owing to want of time and the displacement of the depôts. He had about 10,000 foot soldiers, and 3,000 cavalry composing the 1st cavalry corps, and these he was obliged to weaken by leaving some detachments at Metz and Thionville.

Marshal Ney had two divisions of the Young Guard that he concentrated at Epinal. We were then about to have on the opposite side of the Vosges the Marshals Victor, Marmont, and Ney, between Metz, Nancy, and Epinal, and on the high ground that separates Franche-Comté from Burgundy, that is to say at Langres, we had Marshal Mortier with the Old Guard, both falling back, but at the same time confronting, on one side, Blucher, who was advancing from Mayence to Metz, amidst our fortresses, and on the other side Schwarzenberg, who had flanked them by violating the Swiss neutrality, and who was advancing from Bâle and Besançon on Langres.

Thus Lorraine, Alsace, Franche-Comté, were invaded. The enemy promised everywhere to the people the greatest forbearance, and in the commencement kept their word, through fear of provoking a general rising. Terror had seized our rural populations. The peasants of Lorraine, of Alsace, of Franche-Comté, bellicose by temperament and through the influence of tradition, would have

willingly risen against the enemy if they had had arms to fight with or troops to sustain them in the conflict. But they, as well as all the inhabitants of France, wanted money, and the quick retreat of the marshals discouraged them. Overwhelmed by despair they submitted to the enemy.

The retreat of the armies was accompanied by the less regretted retreat of the principal functionaries. The Imperial government, after mature deliberation, had ordered the prefects, sub-prefects, &c., &c., to retire with the troops, in order to create an additional embarrassment for the enemy—that of being obliged to appoint an administration in the invaded provinces. It was the recollection of the annoyances we had experienced in conquered countries, especially where the governing authorities had withdrawn, that caused the adoption of this measure by the government, a measure strongly opposed by the Duke de Rovigo. It would, perhaps, have been wise to have acted thus in a country where there existed no party hostile to the government, and ready to rise at the approach of the Allies. Unfortunately, in France, twenty-five years of revolution had left numerous parties that Napoleon, if conquered, could no longer restrain, and amongst these there was one, that of the ancient régime, the similarity of whose opinions with those of the Allies induced them to hope everything from the invaders. The absence of the governing authorities in France was, therefore, attended with very disagreeable results. In fact, the disaffected, no longer under the surveillance of the prefects, sub-prefects, and police, gave vent to their hostile feelings at the approach of the enemy, and rose when they had advanced some way to aid them in forming administrations favourable to their views; they were even preparing to proclaim the Bourbons. These sentiments did not prevail in the rural districts, where the people were deeply irritated by the long train of ills entailed by the invasion. But in the cities, where the ferment of opinion is generally strongest, the hatred of the Imperial government was general, and as the ills entailed by the invasion were little felt by the citizens, the most dangerous manifestations burst forth, not alone on the part of the royalists, but from all those who were weary of despotism and of war. Thus France was invaded at the very moment when suffering, exhausted, and torn by faction, she was no longer able to renew the noble example of patriotism she had exhibited in 1792; and it was not the least of the errors committed by the Imperial government that France was obliged to show herself in this state to the European coalition.

On the approach of the soldiers of Prince Schwarzenberg towards Langres some of the chief inhabitants of the city, aided by a populace tired of conscription and the *droits reunis*, threatened to rise against the troops of Marshal Mortier. At Nancy the municipal authorities and some influential persons of the country had received Marshal Blucher with great honours, and even offered him a banquet. The Prussian General had spoken to them of the good

intentions of the Allies, of their desire to deliver France from her tyrant, and he was eagerly listened to by people whose hearts were torn by the miseries attendant on a protracted war.

Our armies retreated, leaving behind them defenceless peasants, whose last supplies they were often obliged to seize, and cities exasperated against the Imperial government, willingly giving ear to the promises of the Allies, who presented themselves not as conquerors but as liberators. One additional circumstance completed the misery of this picture. The few survivors of our glorious armies, disheartened by suffering, humiliated by continued retreats, gave utterance to their discontent, and often re-echoed the remarks of the urban populations. The old soldiers did not desert their standards, but the conscripts, especially those who belonged to the departments through which the armies were passing, made no scruple of quitting the ranks, and the Marshals Victor and Marmont had already, in this way, lost some thousands.

An occular witness of this distressing position of affairs, a faithful aide-de-camp of the Emperor, General Dejean, had made him an exact portraiture of these things, and assured him that all was lost, if he did not hasten by his presence to apply a remedy. In the Low Countries, affairs did not wear a better aspect. Marshal Macdonald seeing himself out-flanked on the right by Blucher's column, which had crossed the Rhine between Mayence and Coblentz, had summoned to his aid the 11th and 5th infantry and the 3rd cavalry corps, besides what remained of the troops returned from Holland, and had retired to Mezières with about 12,000 men, leaving only very small garrisons at Wesel and at Maestricht. General Decaen, being sent to Antwerp, had assembled there a garrison of from 7 to 8,000 men, composed of sailors and conscripts, and had, moreover, thrown 3,000 men into Flushing and 2,000 into Berg-op-Zoom, but had abandoned Breda which could not be defended, and Willemstadt which could have been defended, and which was an important point on the Wahal. The desertion of this latter place was much to be regretted, for after having lost Holland, it would have been a great advantage to preserve, between Holland and Belgium, the water-line which offered the most defencible frontier. But General Decaen, being able to perform only a part of his task, had preferred Antwerp and Flushing to all the other places. He had taken up a position, with the guards, in advance of Antwerp, resolved to defend energetically this great arsenal, which had so long excited the violent hatred of England, and kept alive an incessant solicitude on the part of Napoleon.

The public danger could not be more alarming, particularly if we consider that since the letter of the 10th of December, in which M. de Metternich acknowledging the receipt of the note of the 2nd of December, had declared that he was about to submit it to the allied courts, the French Cabinet had received no further communication. This silence, joined to the offensive movement of the armies, seemed to indicate that the allies no longer thought of

negotiating, and that henceforth their sole thought would be to accomplish our destruction.

Whatever might be the activity of Napoleon, he could not be ready to face the enemy before a considerable portion of France should be invaded, and meanwhile he was obliged to submit to the annoyance of seeing the best provinces—the best, both materially and morally—occupied by the enemy. To these difficulties was added the danger of permitting seditious manifestations in the great cities, and of allowing the name of Bourbon to be there publicly proclaimed. In such a state of things, it would have been happiness to obtain an armistice even on severe conditions, for the progress of the invasion would have been by this means suspended, and if the Emperor did not succeed in coming to terms with the allied powers, he would at least gain the two months, still indispensable to the completion of our means of defence. Napoleon had too much sagacity to believe that his enemies, whose advance a severe winter had not interrupted, would suspend their march to listen to mere parleying. He was even convinced that they had abandoned the idea of negotiating, and no longer wished to conclude a peace except within the walls of Paris. Nevertheless, a trial would cost nothing, and, in case of failure, the worst that could happen, would be to remain as he was. Besides, according to what M. de Saint Aignan had seen, and according to reports received from the invaded provinces, there existed between the Allies, serious dissensions. Austria, so rumour said, was offended at the pretensions of Russia and inclined to peace. In fact, the Emperor Francis, independent of the love he bore his daughter, was not inclined to augment the importance of Russia, or to satisfy the maritime jealousies of England; and if he got what he desired in Italy, it was possible that he might pause in his course. Then, if Austria abandoned hostilities, all the Allies would be obliged to do the same. To these suppositions, which were not devoid of probability, there was but one to oppose, but that one was very plausible; it was, that through fear of a rupture, all the Allies, including the Austrians, would refuse every personal advantage, however great. If amongst these opposite chances, the fortunate one turned up, France was saved, and therefore Napoleon did not hesitate to make a last attempt to negotiate, however small might be the hope of success.

He at first thought of sending to the camp of the Allies, M. de Champagny (the Duke de Cadore), who had been Minister of Foreign Affairs, prior to which he had been Ambassador at Vienna, where he had won the esteem of the Emperor Francis. However, the very natural reflection afterwards suggested itself that to negociate with the allied monarchs, too important and influential a personage could not be chosen, and acting on this consideration, Napoleon determined to send M. de Caulaincourt himself. He confided to him the double mission of treating for peace, and, if it could be done without testifying too much alarm, to try to obtain

30556

an armistice. As to peace, the conditions were still the same that we have already mentioned, that is to say, the line of the Rhine, but the great line, that which following the course of the Wahal, cuts off North Brabant from Holland. The idea of excluding the House of Orange was abandoned, as well as the hope of creating in Westphalia a State for King Jerome. In Italy, France, yielding part of the territory to Austria, without requiring anything for herself, persisted however, in demanding an appanage for the Princess Eliza, and if possible for the brothers of Napoleon, Jerome and Joseph. The difference between these terms and the project of peace drawn up by Napoleon, on the morrow of the Frankfort propositions, was not great. With regard to the armistice, M. de Caulaincourt, in order to win over Austria, was to offer her underhand, the fortresses of Venice and Palma-Novo, which implied the concession of the line of the Adige. Those of Hambourg and Magdebourg were also to be immediately delivered up to Prussia, still with the object of obtaining a suspension of arms. The natural consequence of the evacuation of these four fortresses in Italy and in Germany would have been the speedy return of the garrisons, which would have given an addition of 10,000 men at least to the army of Italy, and 40,000 to the army of the Rhine.

The only objection that could be made to the sending M. de Caulaincourt, was the difficulty of presenting himself to the ministers of the coalition, when no place had been appointed for negotiation, and the mention of Manheim in M. de Bassano's letter of the 16th of November had led to no result. However, the Emperor was in a position where the whispers of self love must be hushed, and, as the danger was every moment increasing, it was ultimately agreed that M. de Caulaincourt should repair without delay to the French outposts, that he should then write to M. de Metternich, saying that in consequence of the assurances brought in his name by M. de Saint-Aignan, and his formal invitation to renew negotiations, the Emperor did not wish that any delay on the part of France should prolong for one hour the ills entailed by war; that M. de Caulaincourt, had therefore repaired to the out-posts, ready to set out for Manheim, or any other city the allied monarchs might please to appoint.

If when M. de Caulaincourt arrived at the outposts he should be left there in a humiliating position, which was possible, there would be at least some compensation for this humiliation, for it would prove that Napoleon desired peace, that no difficulty was now offered by his obstinacy, and the knowledge of the ill treatment received by his envoy might win him back the good opinion of the French.

Matters having been thus arranged, M. de Caulaincourt set out on the 5th of January for the French outposts, leaving M. de la Besnardière, the most skilful clerk in the department, to replace him in the administration of foreign affairs. Napoleon was preparing to set out soon himself to support with his sword the negotiations that M. de Caulaincourt was exercising his influence to resume.

M. de Caulaincourt repaired to Luneville, a place rendered famous by a treaty concluded in happier times, and on arriving at the foot of the Vosges, he met our armies retreating precipitately, and preceded in their retreat by the flight of all the public functionaries. He heard the remarks of the troops and the people, he saw the wretchedness of the officers, the desertion of the young soldiers, and the newly-awakened audacity of the royalist party, who, without being popular, obtained a hearing when they spoke of peace, legal rights, even of liberty. A worthy citizen and a brave soldier, M. de Caulaincourt was overwhelmed with grief when he saw our provinces invaded, and our armies put, as it were, to rout. To his grief as a citizen was added his sorrow as a father, for his private fortune, that is to say the property of his children, was involved in the destiny of Napoleon, and he was deeply afflicted at the danger that threatened the imperial throne. He hastened to describe to Napoleon things as they were, and point out the dejection of certain military chiefs who were not faithless, but discouraged, and he begged him, after reflecting deliberately on his position, to send him more acceptable conditions of peace. At the same time he wrote to M. de Metternich, saying that, astonished at his silence, which seemed inexplicable when he referred to the communications of M. de Saint-Aignan, he had come expressly to obtain a reply, which he awaited at the outposts, ready to repair to any place that the Allies might appoint for entering into negotiations.

This demand for an explanation having reached M. de Metternich through M. de Wrede, the former was not a little embarrassed, for after the pacific demonstrations the Allies had made, to refuse to treat would have been a gross, even a dangerous inconsistency, both parties being equally anxious to gain the good opinion of the public, whether in allied Europe or in France. M. de Metternich and the Emperor Francis were still disposed to negotiate with increased ambition, it is true, touching Italy, but the imagination of the other allies was too strongly inflamed, since that, in compliance with the wishes of England, and in obedience to the strong impulse of German passions, hostilities had been again renewed. The unexpected facility with which they had penetrated into Switzerland and France had persuaded them that they had nothing more to do but to march forward in order to put an end to the war in a manner conformable to their most extravagant desires, and to hear them speak one would have said they had no other enemy to fear than their own dissensions. These, it is true, were very great. Alexander, still discontented at the entrance into Switzerland, did not wish that the popular party should be oppressed for the advantage of the aristocratic, whilst Austria acted in a manner directly opposite. Austria did not wish the Danes to be sacrificed to the prince of Sweden, or the king of Saxony to Prussia, and Alexander wished directly the contrary. The Tyrolese begged to be placed immediately under the government of Austria,

and Bavaria demanded that she should be first indemnified for the loss. England thought only of establishing the dynasty of the House of Orange, in order to shut out France from the Scheldt, and Austria before consenting to this measure, wished that England should promise to support her against Russia. In such a chaos of contending interests, it would be difficult to come to a resolution on any subject, more particularly on that of suspending hostilities, a subject more likely than any other to excite differences of opinion, and awaken angry feeling.

Intelligence now arrived of good augury for the Allies. This was the approaching arrival of Lord Castlereagh himself, who did not fear to quit the Foreign Office, in order to represent England amongst the allied sovereigns. Up to this time England had had as agents, Lord Cathcart, a brave soldier, but little skilled in diplomacy, and Lord Aberdeen, a man of enlightened mind, but accused of being too pacifically inclined. It was not sufficient in this assemblage of sovereigns, where each power was represented by emperors, by kings, or by prime ministers, to have merely ambassadors, whatever might be their merit. The British Cabinet decided then to send the most eminent of its members, Lord Castlereagh, to the ambulatory Congress of the Coalition, to moderate the passions that prevailed there, to maintain union, and to obtain the fulfilment of England's desires, and these desires being satisfied, to take part on every other question, with the moderate against the extreme party. In short, Lord Castlereagh's mission, which seems natural enough, was to preach moderation to the Allies, but to bate nothing of England's pretensions. He was, besides, to enter into explanations touching the war budget of Count Pozzo, and to make free use of English money for the accomplishment of his views, throwing from time to time, not his sword, but his gold, into the balance. No man was better suited than Lord Castlereagh to fulfil such a mission. His name was Robert Stewart; his brother, Charles Stewart, afterwards Lord Londonderry, accredited to the court of Bernadotte, was one of England's most active and most zealous agents. Lord Castlereagh, descended from an Irish family, inherited an ardent and energetic temperament, but tempered in him by lofty reason. His intellect, strong and far-seeing, his temper cautious and firm, he was capable of acting at the same time with vigour and with prudence; exhibiting in his manners the proud simplicity of an Englishman, he was called to exercise, and he did exercise, a great influence on the Allies. He was, on almost every question, furnished with absolute powers. With his temperament, with his instructions, it might be almost said that it was England herself that was transplanted from her sea-girt home, and appeared in the camp of the Allies. Having left London about the end of December, and having abode some time in Holland, to give advice to the Prince of Orange, he was not expected at Fribourg until the latter end of January. None of the coalition thought of taking a decided resolution before his arrival, or of giving a reply to any

diplomatic communications. A strong rivalry already existed between the Allies, to know who should see, who should converse with him first, in order to gain him as a partizan. Alexander had let Lord Castlereagh know, through Lord Cathcart, that he hoped to be the first to have an interview with him.

The expected arrival of Lord Castlereagh furnished M. de Metternich a means of replying to the French envoy. He let M. de Caulaincourt know that England having come to the determination of sending her Minister of Foreign Affairs to the camp of the Allies, they were obliged to wait his arrival before fixing the place, the object, and the direction of fresh negotiations. Besides this official reply, M. de Metternich wrote a private letter to M. de Caulaincourt, polite and flattering as regarded himself personally, but very obscure as regarded matters of business. The purport was that the Allies still wished for peace, that they hoped it, that there was no cause to despair of it, but that they must still wait patiently. As to the rest, there was not a word in allusion to the possibility of a suspension of hostilities. This letter was accompanied by one from the Emperor Francis to Maria Louisa. This Prince had believed his daughter to be ill; he inquired after her and received a letter, to which he replied. He expressed much affection for Maria Louisa, a great desire for peace, but not so ardent a hope of attaining it; he also expressed a resolution of labouring sincerely for that end, and lastly he gave utterance to the vexation of encountering serious difficulties in the general confusion of ideas, the result of the confusion of things that had prevailed during the past twenty years.*

M. de Caulaincourt transmitted these several replies to Napoleon, and not wishing to draw upon himself public attention, which would add to the humiliation of his position, he waited at the out-

* I give here this instructive and interesting letter, which shows plainly the personal feelings of the Emperor of Austria towards his daughter, his son-in-law, and France.

26th December, 1813.

DEAR LOUISA—I received yesterday your letter of the 12th of December, and it gave me much pleasure to learn that you are in good health. I thank you for the kind wishes you offer me for the new year; they are welcome, for I know your sincerity. I offer you mine with all my heart.

As to peace, be persuaded that I do not desire it less than you, than all France, and, as I hope, your husband. It is only in peace that happiness and safety can be found. My views are moderate. I wish everything that can secure the duration of peace, but in this world it is not sufficient merely to wish. I have important duties to fulfil towards my Allies, and unfortunately the question of the future peace, which I still hope is near, is very complicated. Your country has overturned long-established ideas. When we come to debate these questions, we have to contend with well-founded complaints or with prejudices. But peace is not on that account less ardently desired by me, and I hope we shall soon be able to reconcile our peoples. In England there is no manifestation of ill-will, but great preparations are being made. This necessarily occasions delays, until things are put *en train*; then all will go on prosperously, please God.

I am delighted with the account you give of your son; your brothers and sisters are well according to the last accounts I received, so is my wife. I too, am in good health.

Believe me over your affectionate father,

FRANCIS.

posts, until the arrival of Lord Castlereagh, which was daily expected, should lead to more serious communications.

Napoleon was too well aware of the real state of things to be surprised at the reception M. de Caulaincourt got. Each day was marked by a fresh retrograde movement of his armies, and he could no longer defer placing himself at their head. Marshal Victor, more and more frightened at the number of the enemy, had finished by re-crossing the Vosges, after having abandoned all the defiles. The heroic cavalry of Spain, not sharing the Marshal's panic, always rushed upon the enemy's squadrons and cut them down when they came in contact. Marshal Victor had fallen back successively on Epinal and Chaumont, and had taken up his position on the Upper Marne, near Saint-Dizier, having lost through fatigue and desertion between 2,000 and 3,000 men. In this state, he had remaining, at the utmost, 7,000 foot soldiers and 3,500 horse. Marshal Marmont, after having tried to oppose Blucher on the Sarre, had fallen back on Metz, had paused there a short time, to leave the Durutte division which had been cut off from Mayence, and which he had picked up on the way, in garrison. He then retired to Vitry. He had remaining about 6,000 foot soldiers and 2,500 horse. These two Marshals had been joined on the Upper Marne by Marshal Ney with the two divisions of the Young Guard, re-organized between Metz and Luxembourg, whilst Marshal Mortier, after having advanced to Langres with the Old Guard, fell back towards Bar-sur-Aube, followed closely by General Giulay and the Prince of Wurtemberg.

Napoleon had flattered himself that the corps of Marmont, Victor, Macdonald, whilst retreating might recruit and raise their number to 15,000 each. They certainly had received some reinforcements, but desertion, and the necessity of providing for the defence of the fortresses, had reduced them to the small number we have cited. The Guard that Napoleon had hoped to raise to 80,000 infantry did not amount to more than 30,000, of whom, from 7,000 to 8,000 were in Belgium under General Roguet and Barrois, 6,000 under Marshal Ney near Saint-Dizier, 12,000 under Marshal Mortier at Bar-sur-Aube. It is true that 10,000 had just been drilled at Paris. The horse guards, out of 10,000 fit for service, had 6,000 mounted, of whom half were with Mortier, and half with Lefebvre Desnoëttes. The latter had returned in all haste from the Scheldt to the Marne. Of the divisions of reserve that were formed at Paris by drafting conscripts into the depôts, one, scarcely amounting to 6,000 men, had set out before being completed, under the command of General Gérard, to reinforce Marshal Mortier on the Aube; the other had repaired to Troyes, under General Hamelinaye, and reckoned scarcely 4,000 conscripts, wholly undrilled. The horse reserve, formed at Versailles by the combination of all the cavalry depôts, had already furnished 3,000 horse soldiers, whom General Pajol, covered with still-gaping wounds, had led to Auxerre. Such were the resources

that the rapid succession of events had permitted Napoleon to assemble in January. We must add to these, the National Guards that came from Picardy to Soissons, from Normandy to Meaux, from Bretagne, and from Orleanais to Montereau, and from Burgundy to Troyes.

Napoleon did not despair with these feeble means of making head against the storm. He ordered that the two divisions of the Young Guard should be completed as quickly as possible, and that the organization of the divisions of reserve should be continued by means of the depôts and conscripts. He ordered that the men should not remain a single day in Paris; as soon as they were provided with a vest, a schako, shoes, and a musket, they were to set out for the army, no matter how little drilling they might have gone through. He infused new vigour into the clothing magazines established at Paris, but he encountered more difficulty in providing fire arms than any other necessary. There were at Vincennes only 9,000 new muskets and 30,000 old; workmen were every day employed at the latter, to render them fit for service. There was scarcely enough to arm the men that were drafted into the depôts as they arrived. The artillery, that had been crowded into Vincennes, drawn by horses, picked up anywhere and everywhere, was to be sent off immediately to Châlons, where our forces were about to assemble. The private treasure of Napoleon supplied the funds, which the public Treasury was inadequate to. M. Mollien, an excellent administrator of the public money in times of peace, but taken by surprise in these extraordinary circumstances, had not been able, notwithstanding the additional centimes, to supply the expenses of the army. Napoleon, out of the 63,000,000f. that remained of his personal savings, had given 17,000,000 to General Drouot for the Guards, about ten to the Treasurer for the different other services, eight for fresh horses, clothing, and the manufacture of fire-arms, and one to his brothers, now crownless and penniless kings. He intended to bring 4,000,000 with him, and 23,000 or 24,000 were to be left at the Tuilleries to provide for urgent or unforeseen wants.

If the troops of Spain could have been brought up, they would have been at this moment a most valuable aid. But no intelligence had yet been received of the reception given to the Duke de San Carlos, nor anything further relative to the treaty of Valençay. Ferdinand VII., waiting with continually increasing impatience the opening of his prison doors, was in as great ignorance as the French Cabinet.* This silence was a bad omen, and in any case the Emperor could not withdraw the troops from the frontier before knowing whether the French or English would cross the Pyrenees. Nevertheless, as we have seen, Napoleon ordered Suchet to send 12,000

* The work of M. Fain, which on this point contains more than one error, although founded principally on the documents of the Duke of Bassano, describes Ferdinand VII. as arriving at Madrid on the 6th of January. This prince did not leave Valençay until the 19th of March.

men to Lyon, and General Soult to send 15,000 men to Paris as quickly as possible. To these he joined two of the four divisions of reserve formed at Bordeaux, Toulouse, Montpellier, and Nîmes. The four did not amount to more than 18,000 conscripts, instead of the 60,000 he had flattered himself with being able to raise; but they were composed of skeleton regiments borrowed frem the army of Spain, and all good soldiers. Napoleon sent the Bordeaux division to Paris. It amounted to about 4,000 men; that of Nîmes, which amounted to about 3,000 men, was sent to Lyon. Such was his distress, that even these resources were become of actual importance. The division sent to Lyon was to serve as an addition to Augereau's army; the division sent on to Paris was to augment this assemblage of troops of all kinds, the Young Guard, battalions drawn from the depôts, National Guards, old bands of Spain; and from these he hoped to draw, as soon as they were ready, sufficient men to sustain the terrible struggle that was about to take place between the Seine and the Marne. Lastly, he made preparations for the defence of the capital.

More than once, even in the hey-day of his prosperity, had Napoleon, by a kind of prescience which revealed to him the consequence of his errors without teaching him to avoid them, more than once we say, even then, had he, in fancy, seen the armies of Europe at the foot of Montmartre, and after each dark-boding vision had he resolved to fortify Paris. But again, carried away by the torrent of his thoughts and his passions, he had lavished millions on Alessandria, Mantua, Venice, Palma-Nova, Flushing, Texel, Hambourg, and Dantzig, and had neglected the capital of France. If he had commenced to fortify Paris in the days of his prosperity, the Parisians might have smiled, and there would have been no harm done. In January, 1814, such a proceeding would have made them tremble, and would have augmented the disaffection of some, and the consternation of others. However, in Napoleon's opinion, were Paris beyond the possibility of danger, the success of the approaching campaign would be secure; for, if in manœuvring between the Aisne, the Marne, the Aube, and the Seine, which flow concentrically towards Paris, he had been certain of a common focus where they all unite, he would have acquired a liberty of action which would have given him, with his genius, with his perfect knowledge of the locality, and holding possession of all the passages, an immense advantage over enemies embarrassed in their progress, always ready to repent of having advanced too far, and whom he might probably have surprised in some false position, where he would have overpowered them. On this account he was continually thinking of fortifying Paris, but he feared the moral effect of such a precaution. He had ordered a committee of engineer officers, appointed especially for the inspection of fortresses, to draw up a plan for the defence of Paris, with instructions to keep the matter a profound secret. As the plans they proposed required immediate and conspicuous labours, he had abandoned them, and had contented himself

with selecting, quietly and unostentatiously, sites where redoubts could be erected. He prepared great palisades, which were to serve either to strengthen the enclosure, or as *tambours* before the gates. In short, he wished to collect within the walls of Paris a supply of artillery and munitions of war, deferring, until the last moment, to organize with the aid of the inhabitants and the depôts an obstinate defence for the great city that contained his last resources and his family, which was the seat of his government, and the key to the entire theatre of war.

He commanded some other measures relative to Belgium, to Italy, to Murat, and to the Pope. Discontented with General Decaen, on account of the evacuation of Willemstadt, he replaced him by General Maison, who had distinguished himself so much in the late campaigns. The instructions he gave the latter were to establish himself in an entrenched camp in front of Antwerp, with three brigades of the Young Guard, and whatever battalions of the 1st corps should be formed. He was to endeavour to keep the enemy on the Scheldt by the threat of falling on their rear if they marched towards Brussels. The Emperor ordered Macdonald to fall back on the Argonne, and from thence on the Marne with the 5th and 11th corps, and the 3rd cavalry. He ordered Prince Eugene to send him, if he could, without compromising the line of the Adige, a strong division, which, passing through Turin and Chamberg, should strengthen Augereau. The Emperor still persevered in the same silence with regard to Murat, who became every day more pressing, and threatened to join the Allies, if Italy, on the right of the Po, were not ceded to him. In short, not knowing what to do with the Pope at Fontainbleau, whence he might be carried off by the enemy, and not wishing to restore his liberty for fear of complicating the affairs of Italy, he made him set out for Savona, under the conduct of Colonel Lagorsse, who, in discharging the duty of a gaoler had combined respect with vigilance. The Austrians not having been able hitherto either to force the Adige, or to approach Geneva, Savona was still a safe place.*

These arrangements having been made, Napoleon resolved to set out. The Empress was to act as regent during his absence, as she had done during the preceding campaign, the High Chancellor, Cambacères, acting as Privy Counsellor. Joseph was to assist and even take the place of the Empress if she left Paris, for though determined to defend Paris *a outrance*, Napoleon had not resolved to leave his wife and son exposed to bombs and balls, perhaps even to captivity, if the Allies succeeded in forcing the hastily-got-up

* M. Fain, and other writers, have asserted that Napoleon sent the Pope to Rome this very day. This is an error demonstrated by authentic documents. The departure from Fontainbleau was certainly the commencement of the journey that brought the Pope to Rome; but it was not commanded with the intention of actually sending him there. It was at a later period that Napoleon gave orders that he should return to Rome, and this from motives that we shall explain in their proper place. The state papers contain instructions from Napoleon, and letters from Colonel Lagorsse, that leave no doubt on these points.

defences of the capital. In case the Empress retreated to the interior of the empire, Joseph and the other brothers of Napoleon who might happen to be at Paris, were expected to give an example of courage to the National Guard, and die, if necessary, to defend a throne more important to them than those of Spain, of Holland, or of Westphalia, for it was not only the greatest, but the only one that remained to the family.

Besides these precautions taken against the external foe, Napoleon had thought also of taking some against the internal enemy, that is to say, against the plotter whose object was to restore France either to the republicans or the Bourbons. The chancellor, Cambacères, and the Duke de Rovigo, had received orders to extend their *surveillance*, even to the princes of the imperial family, and in particular to certain dignitaries, such as M. de Talleyrand, for example, who constantly inspired Napoleon with the most extraordinary apprehensions. Though deprived of the most active of his associates, the Duke of Otranto, who was sent on a mission to Murat, M. de Talleyrand was still much to be feared. Napoleon saw distinctly in him the man around whom his enemies, of all kinds, would throng, to erect a new government on the wreck of the overthrown empire. After having felt a decided liking for M. de Talleyrand, and having inspired him with similar sentiments, now feeling himself deprived of the surest means to please—prosperity—remembering, besides, how often, on many occasions, he had offended this great personage, he thought he had done enough to earn his hatred: he reckoned on it, he made sure of it. He feared him, especially since the name of the Bourbons had been revived, for though his past life and opinions ranked him as a supporter of the Revolution, still the ancient Bishop of Autun, now a prince and a married man, was of such high birth, and endowed with such nobility of mind, he possessed so many means of being useful, that his peace might be easily made with the Bourbons. Napoleon saw in him a formidable instrument of counter-revolution. With such presentiments, he ought either to have rendered him powerless to do harm, or attached him to the Imperial interests; but notwithstanding his strength of mind and energy of character, Napoleon, as too often happens with persons slumbering on the brink of a precipice, pursued, with regard to M. de Talleyrand, an unsteady line of conduct. He left him full possession of his liberty; he was still a great dignitary and member of the council of regency, and instead of conciliating whilst leaving him so powerful, Napoleon, on the contrary, made him the most bitter reproaches on the eve of his departure, so strongly did the bare sight of M. de Talleyrand excite, torment, and irritate him. He told him that he knew him thoroughly, that he was not ignorant of what he was capable of doing, that he would keep a strict eye on him, and that at the first doubtful step he took he should make him feel the weight of his authority. Then, after the most violent invectives, he went no further than mere words,

and contented himself with ordering the Duke de Rovigo to keep the strictest watch as well over M. de Talleyrand as over some other high functionaries then out of favour. The Duke de Rovigo was not a man to hesitate in the execution of his orders whatever they might be, but what could he do against a skilful adversary who conducted himself too cautiously to give a hold to his enemies, and who besides was haloed with a mighty fame? It would be dangerous to strike him incautiously, and M. de Talleyrand knew well how to profit of the moment when he might dare anything against an enemy almost entirely deprived of the means of defence.

Napoleon, on the eve of his departure, wished to see and harangue the officers of the National Guard, to whom he was about to confide the interior and exterior safety of Paris. The National Guard of the capital was composed, not of this popular class, courageous and strong, as capable of bravely defending what is confided to them, as of, through their clumsiness, destroying it. The Parisian National Guard was composed of men in easy circumstances, adverse to revolutions, who did not forget that Napoleon had saved France from anarchy, though they condemned him for having precipitated her into a dreadful war. These men detested the republic and had no sympathy for the Bourbons. Napoleon having resolved to fight at the head of his soldiers for the French territory, determined to confide to the National Guard the care of defending his wife and son against any republican or royalist movement that might be attempted within the walls of the capital. He received the officers of this guard at the Tuilleries, with his wife on one side of him and his son on the other. Then advancing into the midst of the guards, and pointing to this child, lately the heir of such high fortune, now perhaps doomed to exile, even to death, he told them he was going forth to defend them and their families, and drive back from their land the enemies that had dared to cross the frontiers, but in going forth he left, as a deposit in their hands, all that was dearest to him, next to France; he left his wife and his son, and set out with a tranquil mind, confiding such pledges to their honour. The sight of this great man, reduced, after having performed so many prodigies, to such extremities, holding his son in his arms, confiding him to their devotedness, awakened in the Guard the most profound emotion, and they promised, in all sincerity, never to consent that any other than he should mount the throne of France. Alas! they believed what they said! Which of them, in fact, though there was a wide field then open to conjecture, which of them could foresee at that moment the far different scenes that should soon take place in these same Tuilleries, and should confound, not alone the sagacity of those who then occupied them, but that of their successors and the successors of their successors!

Napoleon set out next day for Chalons, and in taking leave of his wife and son, without knowing that he embraced them for the last time, pressed them warmly in his arms. His wife wept, apprehensive of never beholding him again. She was indeed destined

never to behold him again, but it was not the bullets of the enemy that deprived her of the sight of her husband! She would have been much surprised, had any one told her then, that this husband, at that moment the object of all her anxiety, should die in a remote isle of the ocean, the prisoner of all Europe, and forgotten by her. As for him, he would not have been astonished had he heard the prediction, for he was prepared alike for utter abandonment, or extreme devotedness from men whom he knew thoroughly, and towards whom, nevertheless, he acted as if he did not know them.

END OF THE FIFTY-FIRST BOOK.

BOOK LII.

BRIENNE AND MONTMIRAIL.

Arrival of Napoleon at Châlons-sur-Marne on the 25th January—Dejection of the marshals and confidence of Napoleon—His plan of campaign—His project of manœuvring between the Seine and the Marne, in the conviction that the allied armies would divide to follow the course of these two rivers—Suspecting that Marshal Blucher had advanced to the Aube for the purpose of joining Prince Schwarzenberg, he determined to attack the Prussian General first—Brilliant conflict at Brienne on the 29th January—Blucher is thrown back on Rothiere with considerable loss—At this moment the Allied Sovereigns assembled round Prince Schwarzenberg deliberate whether it would not be better to pause at Langres to negotiate before carrying the war further—Arrival of Lord Castlereagh at the camp of the Allies—Character and influence of this nobleman—The Prussians through a spirit of vengeance, Alexander through a feeling of wounded pride, wish to carry on the war *a outrance*—The Austrians wish to treat with Napoleon as soon as they can do so honourably—Lord Castlereagh supports the latter on condition that they will oblige Napoleon to retire within the limits of 1790, and that depriving him of Belgium and Holland, a large kingdom should be formed of these for the House of Orange—Eagerness of all parties to satisfy England—Lord Castlereagh having obtained what he wished, influences the Allied Courts to consent to opening a congress at Chatillon, whither M. de Caulaincourt is summoned to propose to him that France should retire within her ancient limits—The political question having been decided in this way, the military question was resolved by the engagement that took place between Blucher and Napoleon—Prince Schwarzenberg comes to the aid of the Prussian General with the entire Bohemian army—Position of Napoleon, having his right on the Aube, his centre at Rothiere, his left at the wood of Anjou—Bloody battle of Rothiere on the 1st February, 1814, in which Napoleon, with 32,000 men resists for an entire day 100,000 combatants—Retreats in good order on Troyes the 2nd of February—The almost desperate position of Napoleon—Having fallen back on Troyes, he has not 50,000 men to oppose to the Allied Armies, that might number 220,000—Filled with the most mournful sentiments, he still does not lose courage, and makes his arrangements on the supposition of the enemy committing a serious error—His measures for the evacuation of Italy, recalling to Paris part of the armies that defend the Pyrenees—Order to contest the possession of Paris to the last extremity, and to send thence his wife and son—Meeting of the Congress of Châtillon—Insulting proposals made to M. de Caulaincourt, which consist in restricting France to the limits of 1790, and debarring her all interference in European arrangements—Grief and despair of M. de Caulaincourt—During this time the military error that Napoleon has foreseen is made—The Allies divide into two bodies, one under Blucher is to follow the Marne and outflank Napoleon's left in order to make him fall back on Paris, whilst the other descending the Seine should also force him back on Paris, to overwhelm him there under the combined allied forces. Napoleon setting out on the evening of the 2nd February from Nugent, with the Guard and Marmont's corps, advances on Champ-Aubert—He finds there the army of Silesia, divided into four corps—Battles of Champ-Aubert, Montmirail, of Chateau-Thierry, of Vauchamp,

which took place on the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 14th February—Napoleon captures 20,000 of the Silesian army, and kills 10,000 with scarcely any loss to himself—Hardly disengaged from Blucher, he falls, passing through Guines, on Schwarzenberg, who had crossed the Seine, and obliges him to re-cross in disorder—Battles of Nangis and of Montereau, the 18th and 19th of February—Considerable loss of the Russians, the Bavarians, and the Wurtembergers—A delay that occurred at Montereau permits Colleredo's corps, which was on the point of being taken, to escape—Great results obtained in a few days by Napoleon—Situation completely changed—Military events in Belgium, at Lyon, in Italy, and on the frontier of Spain—Revocation of the orders sent to Prince Eugene for the evacuation of Italy—Return of Ferdinand VII. to Spain, and of the Pope to Italy—The Allies, startled by these checks, determine to demand an armistice—Prince Wenceslas de Liechtenstein is sent to Napoleon—Napoleon feigns to give him a good reception, but is resolved to pursue the Allies without relaxation; he makes a verbal convention for the pacific occupation of the city of Troyes—Unexpected result of the first period of the campaign.

BOOK LII.

BRIENNE AND MONTMIRAIL.

Having left Paris on the morning of the 25th, Napoleon arrived the same evening at Châlons-sur-Marne. The road was already thronged with fugitives, soldiers, and peasants. The inhabitants of Châlons, to whom the presence of the Emperor gave confidence, cried out repeatedly: *Vive l'Empereur!* but they always added: *a bas les droits réunis,* so general was the disaffection against the established regime become. It was, to say the truth, the cry of local egotism against the most necessary taxes, which the flatterers of the people, to whatever class they belong, have always promised to abolish, without having ever been able to find a substitute, but at this moment the cry signified: *down with the Imperial Government.* But the opinion of the Challonais touching the Imperial regime, was tinctured by annoyances they experienced as vine-dressers of Champagne. Napoleon took no notice of this, and appeared gentle, calm, friendly, and won every heart by the tranquillity of his demeanour.

Berthier had reached Châlons before the Emperor. The old Duke de Valmy, still charged with the administration of the depôts, had repaired there from another quarter. Marmont and Ney arrived at Châlons. They were greatly troubled in mind, though generally little disturbed by the appearance of danger; but now, having only the *débris* of their armies, they earnestly demanded reinforcements, and flattered themselves in seeing Napoleon arrive, that reinforcements would quickly follow. Unfortunately he only brought himself; it was a great deal certainly, as events soon proved, but not sufficient to resist the mass of enemies now pouring down on France. His lieutenants said that of course troops were coming up after the Emperor. "No," he replied coolly, and after having confounded them by this reply, he revived them soon by the boldness and profundity of the views that he exposed to them. It seemed as if, escaped from the gnawing cares that consumed him at Paris, and again become a soldier, he recovered, on

resuming his professional duties, his serenity of mind, and discovered resources where no other person could have thought of finding any. He spoke at considerable length with his marshals, and showed the position of affairs to be nearly as follows.

His forces, were reduced, so to speak, to what the marshals brought with them:—Victor had nearly 7,000 foot soldiers, and 3,500 horse; Marmont had 6,000 foot, and 2,500 horse; Ney had 6,000 foot. These three marshals could, besides, bring into the field 120 pieces of artillery, pretty well mounted. At a distance of twelve leagues, that is to say, at Arcis-sur-Aube, General Gerard had a reserve of 6,000 men; at Troyes, a distance of eighteen leagues, Marshal Mortier had 15,000 soldiers of the Old Guard, infantry and cavalry; these different troops amounting in all from 46 to 47,000 men. Lefebvre Desnoëttes arrived with the light cavalry of the Guard, amounting to 3,000 horse, with some thousand infantry, either of the Young Guard, or battalions drawn from the depôts, which made a total of more than 50,000 men, in the quarter most threatened by the enemy. These troops did not comprise, it is true, the second division of reserve, which was being formed under General Hamelinaye at Troyes, the cavalry that was being drilled on the Seine, under Pajol, and the National Guards. The number was certainly small, opposed to 220,000 or 230,000 tried soldiers that were marching against the capital, without mentioning those that were daily expected. At Paris, two divisions of the Young Guard were being formed, and some new infantry battalions; several divisions of the army of Spain were advancing by the Bordeaux Road, and Macdonald was coming at last, through the Ardennes, with 12,000 men. But these reinforcements would be greatly outnumbered by those the enemy expected, and for the first shock, France had only 50,000 men to oppose to 230,000. Napoleon did not tell the entire truth to his lieutenants for fear of discouraging them, but he did not withhold much. Still, according to his view of things, there was nothing to be frightened at. The enemy's forces were numerous, but divided, and it was impossible for the Allies to avoid great errors, of which the Emperor would profit. The Allies were advancing by two routes, that of the east, from Bâle to Paris; that of the north-east, from Mayence to Paris, and it was difficult for them to do otherwise, having to combine operations with those of the army in the Low Countries. Independently of this forced separation between the army of Blucher—the ancient army of Silesia, and that of Schwarzenberg—the ancient army of Bohemia—the enemy was divided still further, from minor motives. Blucher had left troops to blockade Mayence and Metz; the columns of Schwarzenberg were far distant from one another; that of Bubna had taken the route through Geneva; that of Colloredo came by Auxonne and Burgundy; the columns of Giulay and of the Prince of Wurtemberg through Langres and Champagne; that of Wrede through Alsace. Lastly, the column of Wittgenstein, which was in the environs of Strasbourg. There were still some detach-

ments around Besançon, Béfort, Huningue, &c. It was not possible that so many scattered corps could be directed with such skill as to concentrate their operations at the same moment on the point where they were to fight. Besides, the physical structure of the locality must necessarily involve them in errors, of which the Emperor hoped to profit.

In advancing towards the capital of France, either by the north-east, or by the east, we arrive, after having passed the Meuse or the Saône, on the border of a basin of which Paris is the centre, and towards which the Marne and the Seine flow, forming an angle, whose sides unite at a common apex, which is Paris. Blucher was advancing at this time, along one side of the angle, taking his course towards Dizier on the Marne; Schwarzenberg advanced along the other side, pursuing Mortier along the Seine. Napoleon might come down rapidly either on the one or the other, no matter which, with what forces he could assemble. To the 25,000 men of Ney, Victor, and Marmont, Napoleon was about to add the detachment of Lefebvre-Desnoëttes, with an immense quantity of artillery. He could, after re-ascending the Marne as far as Saint-Dizier, turn quickly to the right, combine his forces with those of Gérard and Mortier, and come down with 50,000 men on Schwarzenberg's column. The probable result would be a glorious success.

This first advantage would stop the too confident march of the Allies. Should the war be prolonged, the French might, by manœuvring skilfully in this angle formed by the Seine and the Marne, obtain other and perhaps considerable advantages. On one side, the Duke de Valney was to occupy the different passages of the Marne by raising the National Guards and barricading all the bridges; on the other side, Pajol, with the cavalry and the National Guards, was to take the same precautions on the Seine, and carry up his operations to the Yonne, which is, so to speak, a detached arm of the Seine.

Between these two lines of the Marne and the Seine, there is an intermediate line, that of the Aube, which increases the difficulties for the invaders, and the means of resistance for the invaded. The enemy, induced, sometimes by choice, sometimes by necessity, to divide their forces between these different rivers, and not having possession of the passages which we exclusively occupied, would furnish a thousand opportunities of fighting, which should be quickly seized, and Napoleon was not the man to neglect such opportunities. During this time the troops from Spain and the interior would arrive, the people, animated by success, would again take courage, Augereau should return from Lyon to Besançon, and attack the enemy in the rear; the commanders of the fortresses were to make frequent sorties against the feeble forces that were blockading them, and if fortune were not absolutely adverse, bright prospects might yet dawn for France; and Caulaincourt, so strengthened, might finish by signing an honourable peace. "All is not lost," exclaimed Napoleon. War offered so many chances if one

would only persevere. No one was conquered but he who was willing to be so. Without doubt, there would be adverse days; they would sometimes be obliged to fight with odds of three to one, even of four to one; but Napoleon had done so in his youth, how much better could he perform the same feat in his ripened manhood. Besides, of all the *débris* of the ancient army, an excellent and numerous artillery had been preserved, so that there were five or six pieces of cannon to every thousand men. Bullets were quite as good as balls. The Emperor and his soldiers had partaken of every species of glory; there was yet one to acquire that would crown all the others and surpass them, that of resisting and conquering adverse fortune; after which the Emperor and his soldiers should retire to the bosom of their families and grow old together in this France, which, thanks to her heroic soldiers, after so many different phases of fortune, should have preserved her true grandeur—her natural frontiers—and acquired, moreover, an imperishable glory.

In uttering these noble sentiments, Napoleon looked calm and smiling; he looked as if his youth had returned, he appeared to believe all he said, and, in fact, he did believe a great part of it, so clearly did his genius-lighted mind foresee chances hidden from others. And so he ended by bestowing part of his confidence on his lieutenants, and left them less dejected than he had found them. The most animated on this occasion, he who displayed the best disposition, was Marmont. Ney was dejected. The hero of Moskowa seemed to have never recovered his spirits since the day of Dennewitz.

During the night even, Napoleon, who did not retire to rest, ordered the Duke de Valney to assemble at Châlons the detachments that were falling back—the depôts were to continue their route to Paris—to raise the National Guards in every direction, and to barricade the boroughs and cities that had bridges across the Marne. He also enjoined Macdonald, who had completed his retrograde movement, to stop at Châlons to guard the course of the Marne. He ordered Mortier to quit Troyes and join Gérard on the Aube, an intermediary line, as we have said, between the Seine and the Marne, and to hold himself in readiness either to receive him or to come to him. He ordered Pajol to keep a strict watch over the bridges of the Seine and the Yonne, such as Nogent, Montereau, Sens, Joigny, Auxerre, and to manœuvre his cavalry far enough on the right, to intercept any parties that might endeavour to advance as far as the Loire.

On the morning of the next day, the 26th, Napoleon advanced towards Vitry. Lefebvre Desnoëttes had joined him. With Lefebvre, Marmont, Ney, and Victor, he had in all from 33,000 to 34,000 men. The enemy occupied Saint Dizier. Napoleon ordered Victor to drive them from their position, a command that was obeyed with extraordinary vigour. The presence of Napoleon had restored the courage of all. The French entered Saint Dizier,

after having made some prisoners from the Russian corps of Landskoi. We shall now relate what meanwhile occurred amongst the Allies.

Weary of waiting for Lord Castlereagh, and spite of his desire to be the first to speak with him, Alexander, who assumed that his presence was necessary everywhere, and who was often useful in many places, thought proper to take up his abode at head quarters, saying that without him the Allies would do nothing but quarrel and take faulty proceedings. He had repaired to Langres, whither the allied sovereigns and ministers had accompanied him. A considerable portion of the army of Prince Schwarzenberg was disposed between the Upper Marne, and the Upper Aube, between Chaumont and Bar-sur-Aube, awaiting Blucher, who was coming up by Saint Dizier. Now serious consultations were held, conformable to the divisions laid down by M. de Metternich touching the various periods of the war. The first term had been reached when the Allies touched the banks of the Rhine, the second was accomplished when they crossed the Vosges and the Ardennes, and now the third and most difficult remained—to march on Paris. Opinions were divided on the question of this last period of the war, and all reckoned on Lord Castlereagh, who had at length arrived, to settle the difficulty. Meanwhile, not to prolong an unbecoming silence, M. de Caulaincourt was informed that Châtillon-sur-Seine would be the spot for future negotiations. It was with difficulty Alexander was induced to make this concession, for he was already disposed to treat only within the walls of Paris. But he was now induced to yield because he had selected the locality for the new congress in France, in order to inflict on Napoleon the humiliation of negotiating in the centre of his invaded provinces. Meanwhile the different divisions of the allied armies were tending to a common centre. Whilst the army of Prince Schwarzenberg was disposed around Langres, Blucher, after having quitted Nancy, had traversed Saint Dizier, had left the Russian detachment of Landskoi there, in order to spread a belief that he was about to make a descent on Châlons, following the course of the Marne, whilst, on the contrary, he quitted the Marne to follow the course of the Aube, in order to join Schwarzenberg, to animate the main body of the army by his presence, to put an end to all indecision, and induce the Allies to march boldly on Paris. Having left the corps of Count de Saint Priest in the neighbourhood of Coblentz, a part of the Langeron in advance of Mayence, and the York corps in advance of Metz, he arrived with the Sacken corps and what remained of the Langeron. He had, on the way, fallen in with the advance guard of Wittgenstein, commanded by Pahlen, and so arrived at the head of more than 30,000 men. He had crossed transversely from the Marne to the Aube, at the very time that Napoleon reached Saint Dizier. The Marne in the upper part of its course, that is to say at Saint Dizier, is only about ten or twelve leagues distant from the Aube.

Such was the situation of the Allies on the evening of the 27th of December, when Napoleon entered Saint Dizier. He learned there, from the prisoners, and from the inhabitants of the district, whom he interrogated with a tact peculiar to himself, that Blucher, at the head of 30,000 men, had passed in advance of him, with the intention probably of joining the column that was in pursuit of Mortier on the Aube. He did not hesitate a moment, and immediately resolved to pursue the Prussian General until he should have overtaken and beaten him. Being able to cut off his means of communication, and intercept the supplies that might arrive from the corps left in the rear, with, moreover, the possibility of overtaking him before he should have joined Schwarzenberg, the Emperor had every chance of finding Blucher in an unfortunate position, of which he would not fail to profit.

Napoleon might, in re-ascending the Marne as far as Joinville, have reached an excellent chaussée, which by the way of Doulevent and Soulaine, abutted on the Aube in the direction of Brienne, but it would cost a day to gain this advantage. He preferred, therefore, turning directly to the right, and advancing directly by a cross road which abutted on the Aube at the heights of Brienne. The country here was bestudded with woods and valleys, and might be traversed in two marches. He ordered Marshal Mortier and General Gerard to remain upon the Aube, and to keep their position, whilst he should take measures to join them. He directed what had arrived of Marmont's corps, with the Duhesme division of Victor's corps, to pass by the Joinville chausseé at Doulevent, which he did not like to take himself; he added to these the dragoons of Briche, to scour the country, and occupy the Nancy road, by which the troops that Blucher had left behind might arrive. With Victor, Ney, all the cavalry, and about 17,000 or 18,000 men, he marched on Brienne by the cross road leading from Eclaron to Montierender. There had been frost on the preceding days; on the 28th, the first day of the march, it rained. It was extremely difficult to traverse these roads, which were only used by wood-cutters. Fortunately, the artillery horses were excellent; besides, with the assistance of the peasants, who willingly gave the aid of their hands as well as the assistance of their horses, the Emperor and his troops arrived, though at a late hour, at Montierender. In traversing Eclaron they found the inhabitants overwhelmed with grief at the ravages committed by the enemy. Notwithstanding the moderation which the Allies had promised to exercise on their first entrance into France, they had soon relapsed into the ordinary habits of invaders, which barbarity on the part of the Russians, and a blind hatred on the part of the Prussians, rendered in the present case more cruel than usual. They pillaged and ravaged through inclination, even when they were not prompted by necessity. The afflicted peasants had addressed their complaints to Napoleon, who afforded them some relief out of his private treasure. He promised, moreover, that their church, which had been destroyed, should be rebuilt.

On the following day, the 29th, Napoleon left Montierender for Brienne. The soldiers found now, as on the evening before, much difficulty in marching on roads broken up by the rains. At length, about three or four in the afternoon, Grouchy, who commanded the cavalry of the army, and Lefebvre Desnoëttes that of the Guard, having debouched by the wood of Anjou, discovered, in a slightly undulated plain, the cavalry of Count Pahlen, supported by some light battalions of Scherbatow. A little further on was seen the small town of Brienne, with its chateau built on an eminence, and embosomed in trees, and further still, the Aube. Numerous troops were seen along the banks of the Aube; they appeared to be retracing their steps. We shall explain the cause of these various movements.

Blucher having arrived at Bar-sur-Aube, a small town situate on the Aube, much higher up than Brienne, had fancied that Mortier was endeavouring to pass this river to join Napoleon near the Marne, and he resolved to prevent him. He had, consequently, advanced on Brienne, Lesmont, and Arcis, intending to cut down the bridges of the Aube. But having learned the sudden appearance of Napoleon, he hastened to retrace his steps, and at this moment he was crossing, at the head of the Sacken corps, the town of Brienne, intending to return to Bar-sur-Aube. In order to cover this movement, Count Pahlen, with his cavalry and some light battalions of Prince Scherbatow, closely watched the plain and the border of the wood by which the French army was expected to debouch. General Olsouvieff guarded the approaches of Brienne, which the grand park of Prussian artillery was crossing, in falling back on Bar.

No sooner did Lefebvre Desnoëttes recognize the squadrons of Count Pahlen than he rushed upon them with his light cavalry, and forced them to fall back on the battalions of Scherbatow, that were formed in squares. The Russian cavalry had taken shelter behind these battalions, and placed themselves on the right of the enemy's line, consequently facing our left. During this time, Olsouvieff had deployed his forces in front of the town, and the Sacken corps, arrested in its retrograde movement, had taken up a position beside Olsouvieff, in order to protect Brienne, which it was most important to occupy, that the Prussian park of artillery might defile in safety.

The French infantry being still entangled in the wood, Napoleon was obliged to cannonade the Russian line, which his horsemen could not touch, and during more than two hours hostilities were limited to an exchange of bullets, which could not be other than destructive. At length, Ney and Victor began to debouch, and Napoleon ordered an instant attack. Victor had left the Duhesme division with Marmont, and Ney had only two weak divisions of the Guards; we had on our side at the utmost from 10,000 to 11,000 infantry, and 6,000 cavalry. Blucher had at least 30,000 men. Still, Napoleon did not hesitate, for it was no longer a question of

numbers, but of time. He sent Ney straight forward on Brienne with two columns; he ordered a brigade of Victor's corps to advance on the right towards the chateau of Brienne, and disposed the remainder of this corps on his left, so as to threaten the road from Brienne to Bar, a movement which must render the retreat of Blucher certain.

These arrangements secured from the commencement the desired success. We had very few of the old troops; the Young Guard consisted of conscripts, scarcely clothed, and who had never fired a musket. They were called the "Maria Louisa," in compliment to the Regent, under whose rule they had been raised and organized. But they were drafted into the skeletons of the old regiments, and led on by Marshal Ney. These young lads supported a violent fire, without yielding an inch, and forced the Russian infantry, though three times their number, to fall back on Brienne. Unfortunately an accident that befel our left wing detracted from this success. Near this wing, the feeble column of Victor that Napoleon had sent forward on the road to Bar, in order to threaten Blucher's line of retreat, was confronted by the entire Russian cavalry, which had been brought up on this side, whilst ours was on the opposite. Suddenly attacked by several thousand cavalry, Victor's infantry were, so to speak, taken by surprise and forced to fall back. Napoleon, who was in the midst of then, ran the most imminent danger, and saw some pieces of artillery captured before his eyes. This retrograde movement of our left cooled the ardour of Ney. But at this very moment, Victor's brigade, that had been despatched towards the right, succeeded in turning Brienne, forced their way through the chateau park, attacked and carried the castle itself. Blucher and his staff narrowly escaped being made prisoners, but the son of Chancellor Hardenberg was captured. On our side we lost the brave Rear Admiral Baste and some of the marines of the Guard, who on this day terminated a heroic life by a glorious death. The capture of this important position produced a serious impression on the Russians. Ney now attacked them briskly, entered Brienne close on their rear, and carried the town at the very instant that the enemy's artillery passed through. Blucher, annoyed at the result of this encounter, and fearing for the rear of his park of artillery, wished to make a last effort to retake Brienne and occupy it at least for some hours. He made, in fact, about ten in the evening, a furious attack on the town and chateau at the head of the Sacken infantry. The attack on the town was, under favour of night, at first successful, for our young troops were taken by surprise. But a brave officer, commander of the Ender battalion, and who was guarding the chateau with a battalion of the 56th, forced back the assailants into the town, and our soldiers, now recovered from their surprise, either captured or killed them all. This success revived the courage of our troops, they drove the Sacken infantry out of the town, and our artillery, which was numerous, firing as correctly as the darkness would permit, covered the Russians with grape shot.

It was eleven at night when this combat finished. The confusion was so great that Napoleon did not think he could get a lodging in the chateau. He lay in a neighbouring village, and found himself for a short time, on regaining his bivouac, surrounded by Cossacks; he was on the point of being carried off. Berthier, thrown down in the mud, was drawn out all bruised.

On the morning of the next day the French were able to see their position more clearly. They then discovered that they had been fighting against 30,000 men, and that Blucher was retiring through the vast plain that extends beyond Brienne on the road of Bar-sur-Aube. The French pursued him with a hundred pieces of artillery, and kept up an incessant and destructive fire as far as the village of Rothière, where Blucher stopped.

This battle was highly honourable to our young soldiers, who, fighting with two to one against them, had conquered the most experienced of the allied troops, led by their bravest general. Unfortunately it was not against odds of two to one, but of five to one, they would soon be obliged to fight, to make an effort to save France! The enemy had left in our hands about 4,000 men, either killed or wounded. On our side, about 3,000 were put *hors de combat*. But as we remained masters of the battle-field, our wounded could not be reckoned as lost. The moral effect of this battle was more important than any material advantage that resulted from it. Our soldiers, utterly dispirited when Napoleon joined them at Châlons, began to recover their courage on seeing him, in fighting again by his side, and resuming, under the mighty momentum of his genius, the habit of conquest.

Though Napoleon had not obtained all the advantages he hoped from a sudden irruption amongst the dispersed corps of the Allies, still he had made them feel his presence; he had shown them that they could not reach Paris without firing a shot, as they had flattered themselves from the facility of their first movements, and he had placed himself between them and the capital, so as to block the way. With regard to the object in view, no position could be more happily chosen than Brienne.

The River Aube, on which Napoleon had just paused after the occupation of Brienne, divides into two parts, as we have said, the space lying between the Marne and the Seine. Having taken up his position on the Aube, Napoleon was at almost equal distances from the Marne and the Seine, being able, in two short marches, to reach either the one or the other in order to stop the enemy, who would wish to advance on Paris either by Chalons or by Troyes. Having at Brienne the main body of his forces, having besides a body of troops at Chalons, and another at Troyes, with the power of reinforcing alternately either the one or the other, and satisfied, in any case, to fight with troops infinitely superior in number, he was certain of arriving in time on whichever of the two routes should be most threatened. It was not very probable that the enemy would overstep this angle to carry the war beyond

the Marne or the Seine. Blucher, in fact, was obliged to keep up a communication with the troops that were operating in the direction of Belgium, as Schwarzenberg was obliged to keep up a communication with those that were acting in the direction of Switzerland, so that each was somewhat restricted, Blucher in a northerly and Schwarzenberg in an easterly direction. Being obliged, besides, under penalty of the most imminent peril, not to remove at too great a distance from one another, they were unavoidably obliged to follow—Blucher the Marne, Schwarzenberg the Seine, unless they combined to march in a single column on Paris.

It was after having profoundly studied this state of things that Napoleon made his arrangements.

At this moment the two columns of the enemy seemed to constitute but one, of which Troyes and the banks of the Seine would be the natural direction. Napoleon, therefore, determined to concentrate the largest body of troops in the direction of Troyes. For this reason he sent Marshal Mortier, with the Old Guard of Arcis, towards Troyes. He placed General Gérard, with the Dufour division and the first division of reserve, at Piney, half way between Brienne and Troyes. We must remember that at Troyes the second division of reserve had commenced to be formed, under General Hamelinaye, and that it yet amounted only to 4,000 men. Napoleon ordered that it should be raised to 8,000 as quickly as possible, and should be meanwhile reinforced by all the national guards of Burgundy. With Hamelinaye and Gérard, who reckoned 12,000 men, with the Old Guard which comprised 15,000, Marshal Mortier had at his command 27,000 men. Napoleon hoped to add to these, within a few days, the 15,000 that were coming from Spain, which would form a total of 40,000 men, of whom 30,000 were the best troops in the world. By joining Mortier with the 25,000 under his own command, and this he could do in one long march, he would have 65,000 men to oppose to the grand army of Schwarzenberg, and this, in his position, was a considerable force, and, considering his mode of tactics, almost sufficient to dispute the country. He bestowed, at the same time, fresh cares on the defence of the Seine and the Yonne, and he repeated his orders to send to Pajol, besides the small Bordeaux reserve, all the disposable cavalry at Versailles. Pajol was, with these means at his disposal, to guard Montereau, Sens, Joigny, Auxerre, and scour the banks of the Loing canal with his cavalry as far as the Loire, in order to observe any attempt that Schwarzenberg might make beyond the presumable circle of his operations.

Towards the opposite side, that is to say, towards the Marne, Napoleon renewed his orders to General Macdonald, to advance on Châlons with all the troops he could bring from the Rhenish provinces; and he reiterated his commands to the Duke of Valmy to assemble at Ferté-sous-Jouarre, at Meaux, and at Chateau Thierry, as many of the National Guards as he should have time to assemble;

he was to barricade the bridges of these different cities, and to collect as much provision as he could from the surrounding country. In this direction the force was not so strong as in other quarters, but it was only Blucher who could show himself here, and that by separating from Schwarzenberg, in which case, Napoleon having his eye on him as a hunter on his prey, was ready to pursue and attack him either in rear or flank. At the same time he renewed his solicitations for the organization of fresh battalions at Paris, and for fresh squadrons at Versailles, in order to add quickly 15,000 to the 25,000 then under his command. If he succeeded in getting these reinforcements he would be very nearly in a position to make head against all his enemies, for by joining Mortier near Troyes with 40,000 men, his numbers would amount to 80,000; if he joined Macdonald near Châlons, he could increase his troops to 55,000, and this would be nearly sufficient either against Schwarzenberg or against Blucher. Napoleon gave particular attention to tracing the military route of the army from Paris to the banks of the Aube, and he decided that the troops should pass through Ferté-sous-Jouarre, Sézanne, Arcis, and Brienne, which was the most central direction, and whither he ordered munitions of every kind to be brought. Foreseeing that he should frequently have to manœuvre from the Aube to the Marne, he ordered Sézanne to be surrounded with pallisades, and large supplies of provisions and arms to be lodged there. At Brienne, where he was encamped, he fixed his position so as to profit to the utmost of the physical structure of the locality. At Dienville, on the Aube, he established his right wing, which was composed of Ricard's division, detached from Marmont, and of Gérard's, which in case of attack had orders to hasten from Piney to Dienville, He fixed his centre, consisting of Victor's troops, at the village of Rothiere, in the midst of a plain intersected by the high road, and with these was the guard as a reserve. Lastly, he placed his left wing, consisting of Marmont's corps, at Morvilliers, upon the high ground in front of the wood of Anjou. He ordered each chief of division, and especially Marmont, to surround himself with earthworks, in order to compensate for our numerical inferiority in the very probable event of an approaching attack. Thus encamped on the Aube, at almost equal distances from the two routes that the Allies would be likely to take, he awaited two events;—first that his resources, which were in process of preparation, should be completed; and secondly, that his enemies should commit some gross error. Of this last chance he did not despair, for he knew his adversaries well, and he considered his situation much improved since the battle of Brienne. He wrote in this tone to his wife, to Joseph, to the Chancellor Cambacérès, to the Dukes of Feltre and Rovigo, in order that at Paris they might repeat what he said, that so the inhabitants might be tranquillized and become more zealous in providing the supplies he had ordered.*

* Historians and writers of memoirs not having read the correspondence of Napoleon, and not understanding the motives of his actions, pronounced him mad for

During this time grave questions were being discussed in the camp of the Allies, questions both political and military. The political question was whether the Allies should treat with Napoleon; the military, whether they should pause at Langres, or whether they should immediately commence the third period of the war, without having ascertained, by an exchange of verbal communications, that peace was impossible. As might naturally be expected, the more ardent spirits, at whose head were the Prussians and Alexander, influenced by the motives we have already noticed, wished neither to negotiate nor to pause. The moderate party, at whose head were the Austrians and some prudent men of the different allied nations, desired the contrary. The task of deciding between these two parties devolved on Lord Castlereagh, who had at length arrived at head quarters.

Each party, in order to win the good graces of the English nobleman, had accorded him beforehand the chief object of his mission, that is to say, the creation of a kingdom of the Low Countries, which would procure England the advantage of depriving France of Antwerp, and of placing the estuaries of the rivers under a power capable of defending them, and would place her in a position to demand from Holland, as a recompense for such noble gifts, the Cape of Good Hope, which is the Gibraltar of the Indian ocean, as the Mauritius is its Malta. Lord Castlereagh had moreover to confide to the Allies another project, which he felt some embarrassment in speaking of; this was the projected marriage of the Princess Charlotte, heiress to the throne of England, with the heir of the House of Orange, a project which at any other time would have excited strong opposition. But Alexander listened to the revelation of Britain's various ambitions with the smile he accorded to all whose passions he wished to enlist in his favour, and testified his readiness to consent to every desire, without exception, expressed by England. This English project involved on the part of Austria a personal sacrifice, that of the Austrian Low Countries, for in this universal falling back on the past, the Low Countries would naturally have reverted to her. But as for Low Countries, she preferred the lands of Italy,

having stayed at Brienne after the battle of the 29th, and after having shown himself desirous to fight a second battle with such disproportionate forces. It is easy to see, from the explanation we have just given, whether he was mad, and whether it is wise to judge such a man, without having studied his motives of action in authentic documents. Marshal Marmont, in his Memoires, cries out against the orders Napoleon gave him to entrench himself at Morvilliers. General Koch, an excellent military writer, and of much sounder judgment than Marshal Marmont, asks how any one could think, with 30,000 men, of fighting a second battle against all the allied armies. It is clear, from what we have stated, what were Napoleon's real intentions. The enemy being able to operate both in the direction of Troyes and Châlons, Napoleon's object was to take up a position that would enable him to advance on whichever of the two routes should be threatened, not intending, as has been laid to his charge, to seek a general battle, but endeavouring to provide against eventualities with the small forces at his command, that is to say, with almost nothing. Nothing is left us but to admire the vastness of his genius and his stern determination of character in a situation so extraordinary, one to which history scarcely offers a parallel.

and she assented to the views of England after she had been assured that she should receive, in Italy, an indemnification for her sacrifice. There was a last point on which Lord Castlereagh laid considerable stress; it was that no question should be raised about maritime rights. Will it be believed? Here, where those powers were assembled that were desirous of forming a navy, the question of maritime rights was scarcely glanced at; it was looked upon as a private affair, concerning at most France and England, and which ought, as a matter of course, to be regulated according to the wishes of the latter. Thus, everything had been conceded to Lord Castlereagh—the kingdom of the Low Countries, the union by marriage between this kingdom and England, and, lastly, the silence of civilized Europe upon the legislation of the seas.

These concessions having been made, the next question was, with whom would Lord Castlereagh side,—with those who wished for peace, or with those who demanded an uncompromising war? His own desires once gratified, the powerful Englishman was again become perfectly rational, and, for example, on the question of negotiating or not negotiating with Napoleon, exhibited both good sense and diplomatic ability.

Radically, this question meant that the Allies did not wish to have anything more to do with Napoleon, and that they were resolved to dethrone him and replace his dynasty by another. This question presented great difficulties to Lord Castlereagh, whether with regard to England, or to Austria. The English ministers, disciples, and successors of Mr. Pitt, had long been reproached, as we have said, with keeping up against France a dynastic war, and they were so much in the habit of defending themselves before parliament against this charge, that they continued to make the defence, even when the English people themselves, encouraged by success, were no longer supposed to look upon the conduct of the ministers as blameable. As to Austria, it would be very embarrassing to the Emperor Francis to be told that the Allies wished to bring him to Paris that he might deprive his own daughter of a throne. Moreover, if the expected vacancy of the throne of France inspired Lord Castlereagh with the hope of seeing it filled by the Bourbons, whose restoration he ardently desired, it also awakened his fear of Bernadotte, for whom the Emperor Alexander had conceived an extraordinary liking since the interview at Abo, and the discussion of the Norwegian question had caused an intimacy to spring up between the courts of Russia and Sweden.

Having given profound attention to all these considerations, Lord Castlereagh came to the sage conclusion that it was better not to be precipitate, but allow the restoration of the Bourbons to arise from the position of affairs, without seeking, by interference, to alter the course of events. He said to both parties that they had publicly offered to enter into negotiations with Napoleon; that to refuse now to send plenipotentiaries, not only to Manheim, the place

pointed out by France, but to Châtillon, the place indicated by the Allies, would be to exhibit to the eyes of Europe, an inconsistency that would be really embarrassing, and would be strongly condemned in England; it would be, he contended, necessary to negotiate with Napoleon, absolutely necessary, in order to maintain the dignity of the Allied Powers. To Alexander, who was so anxious to get to Paris, and to the Prussians, who were thirsting for vengeance, he said in private, that by adopting this line of conduct, they did not bind themselves in any way, for in offering Napoleon, purely and simply, the frontiers of 1790, they might be sure of a refusal; and even if he did accept the offer, he would be so humiliated, so weakened, that the one party ought to feel themselves revenged and the other tranquillized; but if, on the contrary, he did not accept, then the Allies would be free, and Austria, having herself pronounced for the frontiers of 1790, would be obliged to yield and abandon an intractable son-in-law, with whom it was impossible to come to any treaty; and thus, by not hastening events, they would gradually bring things to the point they wished, without incurring the charge of inconsistency, and without offending the court of Vienna, whose concurrence in the present war was indispensable. To Austria, Lord Castlereagh gave entire satisfaction by supporting the opinion of those who wished the negotiations should be carried on at Châtillon. He told the Emperor Francis and M. de Metternich, that though he believed it difficult to establish a permanent peace with Napoleon, he considered it advisable to try to negotiate with him; that touching the question of what dynasty should occupy the throne of France, England had taken no resolution; she had even tried to dissuade the Bourbons from repairing to the continent. He added that England would sincerely endeavour to conclude a peace; but if Napoleon refused the offer now made, all further treaty should be broken off, and that in this case, the throne of France becoming vacant, Austria, guided by her conservative spirit, and understanding thoroughly Bernadotte's character, would naturally prefer the Bourbonsto this adventurer, who demanded so high a price for trifling services. To all these propositions Lord Castlereagh received a full assent from the Emperor Francis and his minister, who immediately replied that they were bound in honour to assent to the proposal of treating with Napoleon, that a sense of self-respect compelled them to take the same course, for, after all, the Emperor Francis could not forget he was a father; but, if Napoleon would not on any terms listen to reason, they were determined to break with him for ever, however painful such a course might be to the father or Maria Louisa. They did not regard the regency of the latter in the name of the King of Rome as anything serious. Bernadotte was only a momentary whim of Alexander's, of which it would be folly to think seriously, and should Napoleon be dethroned, Austria would prefer the Bourbons as his successors to all others. Every thing was thus satisfactorily arranged between Lord Castlereagh

and Austria, whom he took care to satisfy touching her material interests.

Austria, in fact, feared that the coalition after having made use of her services might trick her; for example, that Russia, in order to get a better portion of Poland, might give up Saxony to Prussia, which would necessitate an indemnification for the House of Saxony in Italy, a combination which was already spoken of at this period. She also entertained other subjects of fear, upon all of which Lord Castlereagh tranquillized her, pledging the word of England for the accomplishment of all Austria wished.

By a mixture of good sense, tact and firmness, and a certain simplicity of manner, peculiarly English, Lord Castlereagh acquired thus rapidly a considerable influence amongst the Allies, an influence to which his position certainly contributed very much; for arriving the last, with abundant resources at his command, amongst people whose interests and opinions were utterly opposed to each other, he possessed all the means of turning the balance to which side he would, and therefore found all willing to subscribe to his wishes in order to secure his aid in the fulfilment of theirs. Lord Castlereagh carried out his views with very little intrigue, and acting in a simple, straight-forward manner, exercised a decisive influence on the destinies of Europe.

Things having been arranged as we have just related, the Allies resolved on the 29th of January, the very day of the battle of Brienne, to send plenipotentiaries to Châtillon. These plenipotentiaries were, on the part of Austria, M. de Stadion; for Russia, M. de Rasoumoffski; for Prussia, M. de Humbolt; for England, Lord Aberdeen. With the latter were joined Lord Cathcart, the English ambassador at the Court of Russia, and Sir Charles Stewart, English Minister in Prussia. It was also arranged that Lord Castlereagh should go to Châtillon to observe personally the progress of the negotiations, to direct them if necessary, and to ascertain by observation whether a beneficial result could be hoped from these negotiations. England was known to be so deeply interested in yielding nothing beyond the ancient limits of France, and in getting rid of Napoleon, if she could find a favourable opportunity of doing so, that none of the Allies distrusted her, or thought of restricting her influence at the future Congress. M. de Metternich might also have gone to Châtillon, but besides that he wished to remain near the allied sovereigns, he felt embarrassed at the idea of meeting the French negotiator, and preferred leaving this disagreeable office to M. de Stadion, who, being an old enemy of France, would experience no other embarrassment at seeing her ill-treated, that what might arise from the effort to repress any ill-timed manifestation of delight.

The conditions the Allies were about to propose to France were, we may now say so, after the lapse of half a century, indecent. Not only was France required to retire within the limits of 1790, though none of the Allies was willing to submit to a similar resti-

tution, but she was required to give an immediate answer to the proposition, and to reply with a "yes" or "no." Moreover, she was to be debarred all interference in the fate of the countries she was called on to give up. What was to be done with Poland, with Saxony, with Westphalia, with Belgium, with Italy; how Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and Switzerland were to be treated; in all these questions France was to have no voice. France, without whose interference the fate of an European village had never been decided; France was to have no opinion on the spoils of an entire world, of which she was at this moment herself despoiled. It is true that Napoleon had often abused the rights of a victor, but amidst the intoxicating smoke of Rivoli, of Austerlitz, of Jena, of Friedland, he had never treated the conquered thus, above all, the conquered who were crushed! But at this moment, France was not crushed; her enemies advanced upon her soil, so to speak, in trembling, and promising to treat her well. Without doubt, she, or rather her government, had committed faults, but in one day they had been all effaced, and if we only call to mind that two months prior to this time the Allies had offered France her natural frontiers, with earnest importunities to accept them; that, after a moment's hesitation she had replied by a formal acceptation, which, in justice, was binding on those who made the offer; if all these circumstances are taken into consideration, we will be pardoned for saying that the conditions proposed at Châtillon were indecent. And though the triumph of Napoleon might be that of an insupportable despotism, still that he might triumph was the wish of every honest man whose judgment was not perverted by the influence of party spirit. It was he, certainly, who had exposed us to these humiliations, but a criminal who defends his native land, becomes identical with the soil for which he fights!

Whilst the plenipotentiaries were preparing to set out for Châtillon, M. de Metternich took the precaution of sending M. de Floret in advance, under pretext of securing accommodation for the numerous diplomatists of the Congress, but in reality to give M. de Caulaincourt, who had just arrived at Châtillon, the frankest, and, we must say, the wisest advice, if adopting it had been compatible with Napoleon's glory. M. de Metternich had not yet replied to the request for an armistice that M. de Caulaincourt had been directed to make him. He explained himself now on this subject by saying, that if he had not spoken of it, it was because such a proposition had no chance of being favourably received; that he had preserved silence on the subject and would continue to do so, lest an unfair advantage might be drawn from the circumstance. The Allies, he said, wished for peace or nothing, they wished it quickly, and on the terms that were about to be proposed. France need not distrust the English; they were amongst the most moderate of the Allies, and to place confidence in them, especially in Lord Aberdeen, would be wise; she ought to seize, as on the wing, the present opportunity of negotiating, of which, if she did

not profit, it would never again return; that in case of refusal on the part of France, the Allies would adopt ideas of subversion, to which Austria, though with regret, could offer no resistance; that the Emperor Francis would be afflicted for the fate of his daughter, but should not be the less faithful to his Allies, to whom he was bound by the interests of the Austrian monarchy, and by great obligations contracted during the last war; he implored his son-in-law to think seriously of these things, and to consent to sacrifices, necessitated by circumstances. As for himself, as Emperor of Austria, he had been obliged to make many sacrifices; he had made them, but, at a later period, had been able to re-establish Austria in her proper position. It was then necessary to submit to necessity, in order to avoid greater and irreparable misfortunes.

M. de Floret was forbidden to take any steps relative to the conditions of peace, or to make the slightest revelation respecting them. But the advice he was commissioned to communicate was enough to indicate that peace was not to be offered on the Frankfort bases.

The political question having been settled, the military question remained to be solved. The Prince de Schwarzenberg, who held in the military world a position similar to that which M. de Metternich held in the political, found himself naturally at the head of those who wished to pause at Langres, either to see the effect of the negotiations, or to escape the dangers of a march on Paris. The allied armies would have to encounter Napoleon, who would be as much strengthened in approaching the focus of his resources as the Allies would be weakened in withdrawing from theirs; they should prepare for a decisive battle, and this, with a General such as he, with soldiers exasperated as his were, was always hazardous, and this battle, if they did not gain it, would deprive them in one day of the fruits of two years unhoped-for success. To these considerations were added others, arising from the difficulty of obtaining subsistence. In fact, they were obliged to incline towards the Marne rather than towards the Seine, on account of the troops left to blockade the fortress, and in advancing they would find themselves in the midst of barren Champagne, where they would have wine and not bread, whilst they should abandon to Napoleon fertile Burgundy. This was an additional motive for awaiting the result of the negotiations, and the arrival of reinforcements, before involving themselves irretrievably. There were, besides, some hidden thoughts, peculiarly Austrian, to which Prince Schwarzenberg did not give utterance, but which influenced his conduct. He said within himself, that the entrance of the Allies into Paris, so much desired by Alexander, would be, undoubtedly, a triumph for this prince, but could not be one for the father-in-law of Napoleon; that besides, to disturb still more the balance of power in Europe by pushing the success of the coalition to its extreme term, would be to disturb that balance for the advantage of Russia, without procuring any profit to Austria.

These reasons, some of which were found in the sequel to be faulty, were nevertheless of great weight. But whilst these points were being discussed, the intelligence suddenly arrived that Blucher, though obliged to leave half his troops behind at Mayence and Metz, had taken up his position in advance of the great army of Schwarzenberg, and was going to encounter Napoleon with the small remaining portion of his forces. After such an event there was no longer time for deliberation, and it became indispensable to go at once to the assistance of the rash Prussian General. An ultimate line of proceeding could be afterwards determined on. In fact, on the 30th January, the morrow of the battle of Brienne, Prince Schwarzenberg put all his corps in motion on both banks of the Aube. Blucher had retired a little behind Rothière, on the woody heights of Trannes. Prince Schwarzenberg placed behind him the corps of General Giulay and of the Prince of Wurtemberg, who, whilst pursuing General Mortier, had paused at Bar-sur-Aube. He ordered his left, composed of all the Austrian reserves under Prince Colloredo, to advance on Vandœuvres, on the left bank of the Aube, in order to threaten the right flank of Napoleon, and hold Marshal Mortier in check. He placed his right, composed of Bavarians, at Eclance, a little beyond Trannes, and sent orders to Wittgenstein, who had already reached Saint-Dizier, to advance as quickly as possible to Soulaines. The d'York corps, that had been left before Metz, also received orders to repair to Saint-Dizier. Lastly, in the centre, where the prince of Wurtemberg and General Giulay had already come to the support of Blucher, he placed as a last reinforcement—the Russian and Prussian Guards.

This was an immense accumulation of forces, for Blucher, after the battle of Brienne, had kept full 28,000 men, reckoning those of Sacken, Olsouvieff, and Pahlen. General Giulay and the Prince of Schwarzenberg did not bring less than 25,000 men. Marshal de Wrede got credit for a like number, as did the Prince of Colloredo. The Russian and Prussian Guards were estimated at 30,000, Wittgenstein's corps at 18,000, and that of d'York 15,000 men. The whole comprised, consequently, 170,000 men, of whom 100,000 were concentrated round Rothière. Opposed to these troops was Napoleon, with one wing on the Aube, the other on the woody heights of Anjou, and the village of Rothière as sole defence for his centre. What troops had he in this position? Thirty thousand men if we may judge by the combat of the 29th of January, and perhaps 40,000 or 55,000 if Mortier, who was known to be at Troyes, could have joined him. Now or never was the moment to pounce upon him, before he could receive reinforcements, and overwhelm him with the 170,000 men who were already concentrated within the space of a few leagues, and of whom 100,000 were already assembled in the plain of Rothière. These decisive reasons put an end to the discussions of the preceding days, and it was resolved that a general engagement should take place. Besides, between Chaumont and Bar-sur-Aube there were no means of procuring provisions, so that it was

necessary to advance or retire. To retire did not suit anybody's views, so that a battle, the result of any forward movement, was inevitable. Calculating on the temerity of Napoleon, on his headlong impulses, the Allies thought it possible that he might take the initiative, and they were willing to allow him to do so, for they were placed on the wooded plains of Trannes and Eclance, and it would be their advantage to await him there.

The entire 31st of January was passed in this expectation. Napoleon having remained motionless, it was decided that the Allies should go to seek him in the plain of Rothière. There was a certain space to be crossed, the different corps were already pretty far removed from each other, the roads were clayey and difficult to traverse, though the weather was cold, and in consequence of these various reasons the battle could not commence at an early hour. Marshal Blucher, to prevent delay, doubled the number of horses to each piece of artillery; but this precaution obliged him to leave half his artillery behind. He employed the morning in passing from Trannes to Rothière. The plan of operation agreed on was as follows:—

Marshal Blucher was, with Sacken, Olsouvieff, Scherbatow, and Pahlen, to attack and take Rothière, which appeared to him easy, for there was no obstacle but a village, situate in the midst of a wide plain, rising in an almost insensible acclivity. During this time, General Giulay was to advance on Dienville, to carry the bridge of the Aube, that supported Napoleon's right wing, whilst the Prince of Wurtemberg, acting on the opposite side through the woods of Eclance, was to carry Giberie and Chaumeuil, small villages connected with the wood of Anjou, where Napoleon had placed his left wing. Lastly, Marshal de Wrede was to attack this left wing, formed by Marmont's troops. In order to accomplish this, he would be obliged to ford a muddy and wooded stream that runs at the foot of the village Morvilliers, and having crossed it, he should carry Morvilliers, and afterwards cross an unprotected and concave-shaped plain, bordered by the wood of Anjou. Behind the 70,000 men who were to be engaged in this manner, the Russian and Prussian Guards were to march as a reserve, which would increase the number of combattants to 100,000. Lastly, at the two extremities of this line of battle, Colloredo, who was at the left of the Aube, Wittgenstein and d'York, who were crossing the forest of Soulaines, were, by executing a double circular movement, to surround Napoleon with 70,000 men, distributed along the two wings. What chance that he could extricate himself, even if he had thirty, forty, or even fifty thousand soldiers under his command?

Such was the opinion the Allies formed of the situation of the French army. This situation was, at the least, quite as disadvantageous as they believed. It was not 50,000, it was not even 40,000 soldiers that Napoleon could oppose to the 170,000 that the Allies led against him; he had at the utmost 32,000 men. He

had besides, it is true, a well-selected position, the resources of his own genius, and the devotedness of his soldiers! We shall see what use he made of the means at his command.

From early morning he had remarked an extraordinary movement amongst Blucher's troops, and knowing that the Prince of Colloredo had appeared at the other side of the Aube, in the direction of Vandœuvres, he was inclined to quit the banks of this river and fall back on Troyes, with the intention of joining Mortier, and making head against the mass of the Allies that seemed to be taking this route; but about the middle of the day, he learned from some fugitives and from the manifest dispositions of the enemy, that he was about to be attacked in front, at Rothière. Once convinced of this fact, it would not have been consistent with his temperament, nor would it have been good tactics, to retire. He resolved to make head against the storm, and warmly receive the expected attack, and to retire afterwards, when he should have shown that he was neither discouraged nor conquered.

Napoleon, as we have said, had placed his right wing at Dienville on the Aube, where the Dufour division was posted under General Gérard, and the Ricard division, detached from Marmont's corps. His centre, formed of Victor's troops, was posted at Rothière, intersecting the high road, and extending as far as Giberie; his left was drawn up in front of the wood of Anjou, protected by the stream and village of Morvilliers. This last, composed of Marmont's corps, which at this moment was reduced to the Grange division, did not number more than 4,000 men. There were, certainly, several pieces of cannon, that Marshal Marmont disposed skilfully, so as to check the Bavarians, should they attack the stream and village of Morvilliers. Lastly, with two divisions of the Young Guard, with all the cavalry, and a numerous artillery, Napoleon held himself in reserve behind Rothière, a little towards the left, so as to aid either Marmont or Victor. It is certain, from the rolls called over that morning, that he had not more than 32,000 men under his command.

The firing did not commence until about two in the afternoon. Blucher, after having traversed with some difficulty, the space that separated him from our positions, advanced on Rothière in two strong columns, one composed of the troops of Sacken, the other of those of Olsouvieff and Scherbatow. A brisk cannonade commenced on both sides, but as we were well supplied with artillery, it was no advantage to the Russians that Blucher commanded on that day. The latter soon wished to operate more seriously, and directed masses of infantry to advance against the principal houses of Rothière. It was the Duhesme division of Victor's corps that occupied this village. Our young soldiers, well sheltered in the houses and gardens with barricades at all the outlets, replied by a determined fire to the attempts of Blucher's soldiers, and succeeded in arresting their progress. Marshal Victor, who appeared dejected on leaving Strasbourg, had recovered all the energy of youth, at

this important moment, and he was in the thickest of the fight giving an example to his soldiers, who nobly imitated him.

Whilst that at the centre Blucher was struggling with these difficulties, General Giulay having defiled behind him, in order to reach Dienville, encountered there our right wing, drawn up in front of this town, on the banks of the Aube. General Gérard had dispersed a part of his troops within the town, and the remainder in the plain in connection with Rothière, and under the protection of a great many pieces of artillery. General Giulay received at first, like Blucher, by a strong cannonade, was not more successful, and endeavoured, in vain, to enter the town himself. He lost a great number of soldiers in these vain attempts. To obtain a better chance of success by attacking Dienville on both sides of the Aube, he transported the Fresnel brigade to the left bank of this river, by the Unienville bridge situate a little higher up. This brigade, after having crossed the Aube and arrived before Dienville, found the bridge barricaded, and themselves exposed to a brisk musketry fire from a multitude of sharpshooters, that lay ambushed along the bank of the river. The brigade, under these circumstances, took up a position on the summit of a hillock opposite Dienville, and directed a brisk cannonade across the Aube. The Dufour division drawn up on the opposite bank, supported this discharge with extraordinary firmness, and replied by a not less destructive fire.

Thus, on our right as well as on our centre, the Allies had encountered a most obstinate resistance. On our left, the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, after having cleared the wood of Eclance, had tried to carry the little hamlet of Giberic, that flanked Rothière, and establish a line of communication with the wood of Anjou, occupied by Marmont. There was here a detachment of Marshal Victor's, that overpowered by numbers, was obliged to abandon the hamlet. But Marshal Victor, putting himself at the head of one of his brigades, retook Giberie and repulsed the Wurtembergers to a considerable distance. Lastly, at the extremity of this battle-field, where the Allies' line was sweeping round our left flank, the Bavarians, after having debouched by the forest of Soulaines, and deployed along the brook of Morvilliers, were stopped by Marshal Marmont, who had chosen an admirable position for his artillery, of which he made a most formidable use.

Thus, after two hours of violent cannonade and fusillade, the enemy had not gained on any side an inch. But they could not brook to be held in check by an army that did not appear to number more than 40,000, whilst they had about 100,000 men, without reckoning the two extreme wings.

The allied troops tried to make a decisive effort about four in the afternoon. Blucher, behind whom the Russian and Prussian Guards were drawn up, marched sword-in-hand on Rothière, whilst at the pressing solicitation of the Prince of Wurtemberg, the Emperor Alexander sent a brigade of his Guards to second this

prince in the attack on Giberie. The conflict then became terrible. The Sacken columns entered Rothière and were driven back; they again forced their way in, having only to contend with the Duhesme division, which did not, at most, amount to more than 5,000 men. This division, led on by Marshal Victor in person, did not abandon the post until half their number was cut to pieces. During this time, in order to occupy the space between Rothière and Giberie, the cavalry of the Guard, followed by their artillery, threw themselves on the cavalry of Pahlen and Wassiltsikoff, and threw them back on the infantry of Scherbatow. But arrested by the Russian infantry, and charged in flank by a corps of dragoons, they lost in this affair, some of their cannon that they had not time to bring away. The Prince of Wurtemberg, supported by the Russian Guards, entered Giberie; and the Bavarians, on their side, ashamed of seeing their progress arrested by Marmont's few soldiers, at length crossed the stream that stood in their way, carried the village of Morvilliers, and debouched in the plain that lies at the foot of the wood of Anjou. This movement was made for the purpose of getting out of range of our artillery, which was doing great execution.

The moment was critical, and Napoleon, who had not ceased to direct every movement, himself exposed to a hail of projectiles, now resolved, though night was already closing in, not to leave his adversaries in possession of so many advantages. Feeling that it was only after intimidating the enemy that he could make a retreat either with honour or in safety, he ordered the two divisions of the Young Guards, his last resource, to advance rapidly on the enemy's two principal points. He ordered the Rothenbourg division, under Marshal Oudinot, to advance on Rothière, and overturn every obstacle in the way, whilst he took himself the command of the Meunier division, and advanced to the left, between Marmont, who had fallen back on the village of Chaumeuil, and Victor, who had lost Giberie. These young troops, led on by Napoleon and Oudinot, advanced with the resolution of despair. The Meunier division, stationed between Chaumeuil and Giberie, stopped short the progress of the Bavarians and the Wurtembergers. Oudinot, at the head of the Rothembourg infantry, deployed his troops without flinching beneath a terrific fire, drove back the enemy's opposing masses, and even succeeded in taking possession of the village of Rothière. Night was already far advanced; the men fought desperately hand to hand in the village, and it was ten at night when the enemy could no longer molest our retreat, that the heroic Oudinot fell back from Rothière on Brienne. Our retrograde movement was executed in good order, covered by the divisions of the Young Guard and Milhaud's dragoons, who alternately charging and charged, kept their ground, but with loss of the artillery, which it was impossible to bring away. The quantity of artillery was too great in proportion to the infantry, to be protected, and therefore, after using the cannon we abandoned them, but saved the gunners

and horses. As to the rest, whilst the centre, composed of the Guard of the cavalry and the *débris* of Victor's troops, retired without molestation, the left, under Marmont, escaped fortunately through the wood of Anjou, and the right, under Gérard, that had behaved so gallantly at Dienville, fell back without check along the Aube, after having killed or wounded a considerable number of the enemy.

Thus finished this terrible day, where the resistance of 32,000 men against 170,000, of whom 100,000 were engaged, was, it may be said, a phenomenon in military warfare. This resistance was owing to the skill and energy of General Gérard, to the good use Marshal Marmont made of his artillery, to the heroic devotedness of the Marshals Oudinot and Victor, and above all, to Napoleon's indomitable tenacity of purpose. But for his iron will he would have been driven into the Aube. His mode of action naturally made the enemy pause, and so, for the moment, saved his fortune. We lost about 5,000 men killed or wounded, and put *hors de combat* 8,000 or 9,000 of the enemy, thanks to the advantage of our position and the extensive use of our artillery. This difference, though a satisfaction in one sense, was no great military success, for the smallest losses were much more seriously felt by us than very large ones would be by the coalition. We sacrificed fifty pieces of artillery, but saved our artillerymen and horses, which proves that we abandoned these cannon, and that they were not captured by the enemy. Napoleon fought this battle with such disproportionate numbers only to cover his retreat; during the night he crossed the bridge of Lesmont without confusion, and reached Troyes in good order. As the entire night would be occupied in defiling, and as he might be attacked by the enemy at the break of day, he left Marmont's corps, which was only composed of the Lagrange division on the right of the Aube and on the heights of Perthes, so as to make Blucher believe that the entire French army was there ready to renew the combat. This corps did not run any serious risk, for it was protected by the narrow but deep Voire, and held all the bridges, behind which the men were sure to find refuge, should they be too briskly attacked.

In fact, the next day, the enemy, fatigued with the combat of the previous evening, and not waking very early, advanced on one side towards the bridge of Lesmont, and on the other towards the heights of Perthes, and paused in a kind of doubt on seeing Marmont's corps drawn up in battle array. Whilst the enemy were inquiring of one another where the French army was, we had defiled quite close to them by the bridge of Lesmont, and Marmont himself, after having played his part in keeping up the illusion, withdrew, by passing the Voire at Rosnay.

However, Marmont was pursued along the Aube by Marshal de Wrede. After having occupied the heights of Perthes for a considerable time, and in a threatening attitude, he had crossed the bridge of Rosnay before the eyes of the Bavarians, and then has-

tened to destroy it. But closely pressed, he had only been able to tear off the *tablier*, and had left the piles standing, whose tops rose some feet above the water. Whilst he was drawing up his few remaining troops in order of battle on the other side of the Voire, he perceived some detachments of the enemy attempting a passage below Rosnay. He first sent some cavalry to oppose them, but finding these not sufficient, and that from two to three thousand men had already crossed the river, he hastened to the spot with a few hundred men, for if this passage were not effectually opposed, his corps might be cut off from the Aube, and Napoleon, then thrown back into the midst of Wittgenstein and d'York's troops, which means, in other words, he would be surrounded and taken. Marmont immediately rushed sword in hand on the detachment that had crossed the Voire by the aid of some piles and planks, attacked them briskly, and forced them back into the river. At this sight, the cavalry made a desperate charge, and in the twinkling of an eye, cut down or made prisoners a thousand men. This exploit having been accomplished below Rosnay, Marmont was recalled to Rosnay itself by a like attempt. Foreseeing that a passage might be attempted at this half-destroyed bridge, he left a very intelligent captain of artillery in ambuscade there, with his company. This captain had allowed a certain number of the enemy to pass one by one over the dismantled piles of the bridge, and had then shot them when within musket range. Marmont's arrival finished them. Thus a body of about 3,000 French had, during an entire day, stopped the progress of 25,000 Bavarians, and had killed or captured more than 2,000 men. This double battle was a real advantage, for by exciting to the highest degree the confidence of our soldiers in themselves, and by rendering the Allies infinitely more circumspect, it contributed to retard their movements, which permitted us to accelerate ours, the only resource that remained in the reduced state of our forces.

Napolcon having crossed the Aube without accident, passed the 2nd of February at Piney, and the next day, the 3rd, fixed himself at Troyes. This last battle, so energetically sustained against forces so superior in number, though a great military achievement, exposed us to great danger. The Allies had assembled all their forces between Bar-sur-Aube and Troyes, and if they persevered in marching, thus combined, on Paris, it was doubtful whether the French, even in resisting to the last man, could arrest their progress. After the battle of the 29th of January, and the combat of the 1st of February, the utmost amount of troops that remained to Napoleon, was from 25,000 to 26,000. Mortier, whom he had just joined at Troyes, had perhaps 15,000 men, General Hamelinaye, 4,000, which raised the entire number of our disposable forces to 45,000 men. Prince Schwarzenberg, with Wittgenstein and Blucher, commanded full 160,000 men, deducting the losses of the two last battles; and this was not all, for Blucher was about to be reinforced, not only by d'York, who was coming from Metz, but by Langeron, who was ready to

come from Mayence, and Kleist, who was withdrawing from the blockade of Erfurt, all three of whom were to be replaced by troops hastily raised in Germany. It was impossible for the French to say to what number the allied armies might amount within a few days, It was possible that they might find themselves, with 40,000 or 50,000 men opposed to 200,000, and then what defence could they make? The soldiers still reposed an unshaken confidence in Napoleon, though some amongst the younger deserted; but the commanding officers, who on the field of battle gave an example of the utmost devotedness, and who had sufficient experience to perceive the danger of an almost desperate situation, but not sufficient genius to discern the real extent of our resources, abandoned themselves, when no longer under fire, to utter dejection. They were plunged in profound sadness, which they made no effort to conceal. This dejection spread gradually to the inferior ranks, and winter, with its sufferings and its privations, was not calculated to dispel the gloom. In Franche-Comté, in Alsace, in Lorraine, the inhabitants had displayed excellent dispositions, and a true spirit of fraternity with regard to the army. At Troyes and its environs, where the disposition of the people was less friendly, where the burdens of war were already severely felt, and where the people were strongly irritated against the government, the reception given to the army was not very cordial, and vexatious conflicts between the soldiers and the peasants added still darker shades to the gloomy picture.

Napoleon, though deeply affected, was not, however, utterly cast down. He still discovered resources, where nobody suspected any, endeavoured to make others perceive them, and displayed, not serenity or gaiety, which would have been an unbecoming affectation under such circumstances, but a tenacity of purpose, and an indomitable firmness, quite sufficient to plunge into despair those who might have wished to see him more disposed to submit to the pressure of events. Neither disturbed nor disconcerted, above all not exhibiting the slightest weakness, supporting bodily fatigue and trouble of mind with a firmness superior to his physical strength, ever in the thickest of the fight, with steady eye and clear-toned voice, he bore the penalty of his faults with a degree of resoluteness that might have effaced them, could great qualities be a sufficient excuse for the ills they have often caused mankind.

Still, the confidence that Napoleon displayed, though in part simulated, was not without foundation. If he had only 45,000 men, including those he brought back from Brienne, and Mortier's Old Guard and Hamelinaye's small division, he expected 15,000 old soldiers who were coming *en poste* from Spain, and who had already arrived at Orleans. This reinforcement would increase his army physically to 60,000 men, and morally to still more. The brave Pajol, who, with 1,200 horse and 5,000 or 6,000 National Guards defended the bridges of the Seine and the Yonne that he had barricaded, as for example, Nogent-sur-Seine, Bray, Montereau, Sens, Joigny, Auxerre, expected 4,000 of the Bordeaux

reserve. There would be within a few days at Paris two divisions of the Young Guard completely fit for service. There were besides twenty-four regimental depôts that had been transported to Paris, and which would furnish by the help of conscripts, twenty-four battalions of from 500 to 600 men each, which would afford, reckoning the two divisions of the Young Guard, four divisions of infantry of more than 20,000 men. Here were besides, accoutrements for some thousand horsemen at Versailles, and wherewith to mount eighty cannon at Vincennes. Here were 30,000 additional soldiers that would, within eight or ten days, raise the total of Napoleon's forces to 90,000 men. Lastly, at Montereau, at Meaux, at Soissons, brave fellows thronged to be drafted into the skeleton regiments of the National Guards, where they could utilise their patriotism. All was not lost if we could only preserve our *sang-froid* a few days longer. Unfortunately there was a deficiency of two things at Paris, not of men, we repeat the assertion, but of money and muskets. As to money, when M. Mollien, quite at bay, did not know where to find 100,000 francs, an order on the treasurer of the civil list realized the sum at the Tuileries. It was not so easy to procure arms. There were, as we have said, 6,000 new muskets besides 30,000 old that wanted repairs. The workmen laboured to render the latter fit for service, but the daily repairs scarcely supplied the daily demand, and the reserve of arms fit for service diminished visibly. Clothes were made tolerably fast; horses began to arrive. Napoleon was writing incessantly to Joseph and to Clarke, endeavouring to stimulate the idleness of the one and the incapacity of the other; he traced for them from point to point what they were to do; sent every day intelligence of his personal affairs to the Empress and Prince Cambacérès; begged them to keep up their spirits and preserve their tranquillity of mind, assured them that nothing had yet been lost, that the enemy had not gained any decisive advantage, and that by constancy and energy all would be saved.

Whilst he was endeavouring to prepare his resources and inspire confidence in them, there remained one happy and fast-approaching chance, which was in reality his sustaining mental force, and of whose realization he had a presentiment. At the actual moment he was threatened with a great and fatal battle, fought beneath the walls of Paris against forces that quadrupled his. This was the sad probability, if the enemy persisted in advancing *en masse*. But might not the enemy's forces divide? Amongst the different routes of the Yonne, the Seine, the Aube, the Marne, might they not be tempted to divide, to extend themselves, either to seek provisions, or to keep up a communication with the troops in the north and east, or, in short, from a thousand different motives? Would not Blucher, who had forces on the Marne and further off, for he left General Priest on the frontiers of Belgium, would he not go to meet them? Schwarzenberg, who had forces on the Geneva route and even as far as Lyon, would he not extend an arm to Dijon?

To these chances might there not be added moral causes of separation; such as jealousies, dislikes, the desire of acting independently of each other? For example, would not Blucher advance along the Marne, leaving Schwarzenberg on the Seine, in order to be more free to follow his own plans? Napoleon suspected strongly these possibilities, and on the second day of his retreat from Troyes his suspicions became almost certainty.* If things were really so, his plans were fixed; he would leave a corps in front of Schwarzenberg, then making a covert and rapid movement, he would pursue and overwhelm Blucher, after which he would return and attack Schwarzenberg. But he did not speak of this project lest his secret might be divulged and come to the ears of the enemy, through an indiscretion on the part of the staff. The presence of a compact mass, four times superior in number to the French army, was a cloud that dimmed every eye and terrified every heart. The French saw themselves obliged to fight a pitched battle beneath the walls of Paris, with forces so disproportioned that victory would be impossible; they wished at any price to dispel this danger, and to dissipate it by establishing peace on any terms. Having arrived on the 3rd of February at Troyes, Napoleon was, in fact, assailed by the remonstrances of M. de Berthier, who had always been prudent, and by M. de Bassano, who had become so since our late misfortunes. That we ought to make a treaty on any terms at Châtillon was their fixed opinion, expressed in the most urgent manner.

And we could certainly make a treaty, for the plenipotentiaries of the different allied powers had just arrived at Châtillon, all willing to subscribe to peace, but on the double bases of the frontiers of 1790, and of our exclusion from all future European arrangements. Received with frigid politeness, M. de Caulaincourt had easily divined that severe propositions were prepared for him, very different to the Frankfort bases. M. de Floret, secretary to the Austrian Legation, commissioned to give in secret friendly advice to the French negotiator, without explaining himself categorically, had said:—"Make a treaty on any terms, for this opportunity is like that of Prague, like that of Frankfort; once neglected, it will never return."

M. de Caulaincourt, alarmed at this advice, and wishing to know what were the sacrifices about to be demanded from France, had not been able to obtain any explanation from M. de Floret, but he ascertained very clearly that the Emperor would be obliged to submit to much greater sacrifices than those demanded at Frankfort, if he wished to save Paris, and with Paris, the Imperial throne. He had therefore written to Napoleon, to beg additional powers to negotiate, for the instructions that enjoined him to demand not only the Scheldt, but the Wahal; not only the Alps, but a part of Italy; not only a legitimate influence over the fate of the provinces given up, but the possession of a portion of them for Napoleon's bro-

* Napoleon made some obscure but positive observations on this subject to the War Minister.

thers; these instructions presented a terrible contradiction to the actual state of things. M. de Caulaincourt had asked for additional powers without saying to what extent; he had made the request on his knees, not like a man who stoops to power to save his fortune and his life, but like a worthy citizen who submits to humiliation for the love of his country. Distrusting M. de Bassano, whom he did not like, and by whom he was not liked, whom he erroneously looked on as the cause of Napoleon's obstinacy, he had written to Berthier, to pray him, in the first instance, to send him exact information as to the situation of military affairs; and in the next place, to beg him—the noble and faithful companion of the Emperor's dangers—to use all his influence to induce him to yield to the pressure of circumstances.

Thus Napoleon had to endure, not only the letter of M. de Caulaincourt, but the most earnest entreaties of Berthier, and of M. de Bassano himself, who now was far from urging his master to resistance. Fresh intelligence arriving on every side, quickened still more the zeal of those who surrounded Napoleon. In fact, the Austrian corps seemed to have extended along our right beyond the Yonne. From four to five thousand Cossacks had advanced beyond Sens, and were threatening Fontainbleau. On our left towards the Marne, the aspect of things was not less threatening. Marshal Macdonald, who had received orders to fall back on Châlons, and take up a position there, had been driven out by the enemy and forced to retreat to Chateau-Thierry. It was even said that he was thrown back on Meaux. The 11th and 5th infantry corps, the 2nd and 3rd cavalry that he brought with him, and that Napoleon estimated at 12,000 men at least, were reduced to 6,000 or 7,000. Bands of fugitives, after having quitted the army, had wandered between Meaux and Paris, spreading everywhere bad news. The Parisians fancied they saw the enemy pouring down on them by three routes, that of Auxerre, that of Troyes, that of Châlons, and only on one of these three did they discern a force capable of protecting them—that which Napoleon commanded in person, and which had, so report went, the advantage in the combat of the 29th of January, but the disadvantage in that of the 1st of February. Movements in Vendée were spoken of, and this country, lately so tranquil and grateful to Napoleon, appeared ready to revolt. In short, to add to the general dismay, it was announced that Murat, even he, the brother-in-law of the Emperor, to whom he owed his throne, had just then burst every bond of political alliance, of love of country, and of family ties, by making a hostile movement in the rear of Prince Eugene. This influx of bad news had completely uprooted public tranquillity. The Empress, dreadfully alarmed, was incessantly sending either for Joseph or the Chancellor, to confide to them her vexations, for at sight of the approaching danger, she was dying of fear for her husband, her son, and herself. There was a report current in Paris that the court was about to retire to the Loire, and every day an anxious

crowd assembled round the Tuilleries to make sure that the carriages in which the Empress and the King of Rome every day took a drive in the wood of Bologne, were not travelling carriages intended to set out for Tours.*

These circumstances irritated Napoleon without shaking his resolution. Where everybody saw subjects of fear he rather perceived causes of hope. He suspected, indeed, that an Austrian corps was advancing towards him, and he was thinking of throwing himself on these troops and overwhelming them. The danger of Macdonald, the manner in which he was pursued, induced him to believe that the main army of the Allies had divided, and thrown one wing on the Marne. It was what he had all along wished for and hoped. On this account he had sent Marmont forward to Arcis-sur-Aube, and had enjoined him to reconnoitre even as far as Sézanne and Fère-Champenoise, that so he may become acquainted with all the enemy's movements, and be ready to take advantage of the first error.

But the Emperor felt called on to reply to the entreaties of M. de Berthier, of M. de Bassano, and of M. de Caulaincourt, and, above all, he felt the necessity of allaying the alarm that prevailed at Paris. "Further powers to treat," he said, "what did they mean by these expressions? Did they mean sacrifices in Holland, in Germany, in Italy, he was ready to make them. The Wahal! He was ready to abandon it, and fall back on the Meuse and Scheldt, provided that he might keep Antwerp. He would sacrifice Cassel and Kehl, though these points were the real suburbs of Mayence and Strasbourg. He would even dismantle Mayence to tranquillise Germany; but on condition of keeping the Rhine. In Italy he wonld give up everything, even Genoa, provided he might conscrve the Alps, and, if possible, something for the faithful Prince Eugene. But to consent to retain less than France, the veritable France, whose limits had been fixed by the Revolution of 1789, would be hopelessly to dishonour himself. But the Allies, he said, did not in reality wish to treat with him; they wished to destroy him, his dynasty, and, above all, the results of the French Revolution. In fact, the proposal to treat was only a lure. If there were any sincerity in the late proposals to negotiate, it was probably because the Allies were concocting conditions so humiliating that he would be dishonoured by accepting them, and this dishonour would serve as a counterpoise in public opinion to the influence of his character, and the force of his genius. But it was impossible for him to con-

* According to my established habit of never making imaginary descriptions, I wish to mention that I have borrowed these particulars, not alone from the correspondence of King Joseph, part of which has been published, but also from those of Prince Cambacérès, of the Duke of Rovigo, and the Duke of Feltre, which are unpublished, and remarkable for minuteness of detail. The circumstances recorded in my pages, are painted in warmer colours in the letters from which I have drawn the facts. I rather soften than heighten the account, knowing that we must always make allowance for the exaggeration of the time in which the events occurred, though this very exaggeration is a distinctive mark of the epoch, and which must be preserved by the historian, in some degree.

sent to such things. To descend from the throne, to meet death itself, would be for him, who was only a soldier, a trifle contrasted with dishonour. The Bourbons might accept the France of 1790; they had never known any other, and it was that which they had the glory of creating. But he, who had received from the Republic, France, with the Rhine and the Alps, what could he reply to the republicans of the Directory, if they flung back on him the fulminating apostrophe he had addressed to them on the 18th Brumaire! Nothing: he should stand confounded. He was asked to do what was impossible, for he was asked to consent to his own dishonour."

Shall we dare avow it, we who during this long recital have not ceased to blame Napoleon's policy, we who condemned as useless, irrational, and even fatal, every project of ambition that extended beyond the Rhine and the Alps? It seems to us that on this occasion Napoleon's view of matters was more correct than that of his advisers; but as it always happens, when a man has been long acting erroneously, he was neither listened to nor believed when he was in the right. His diplomatic agents, disillusioned too late, his generals, worn out from fatigue, conjured him to remain Emperor of no-matter-what empire, because whilst he remained Emperor they would retain the position they then held. France might be circumscribed in her limits, but she would still be great, because she would still be France, and they would lose nothing of their individual greatness. In their eyes the Rhine, the Alps, constituted perhaps the grandeur of Napoleon and of France, but in no way touched their personal importance. Sad process of reasoning, which fatigue rendered excusable in worn-out soldiers, and fear made pardonable in justly-alarmed diplomatists. Undoubtedly the conquests that Napoleon had made from the Rhine to the Vistula, from the Alps to the Straits of Messina, from the Pyrenees to Gibraltar, were not worth the blood they had cost, and, indeed, would not have been worth the life of one man. But, on the other hand, Frenchmen might have been legitimately called upon to shed the last drop of their blood to defend the natural frontiers of France, Napoleon might have been lawfully required to risk his throne and his life for the same object, and, in our opinion, after so many errors, after so many follies, so many extravagances of every kind, he alone was right when he said that his honour was demanded when he was asked to yield an inch of the natural frontiers of France, those frontiers conquered by the Republic, and which had been transmitted to him as a deposit. But the one party, through affection, the others through exhaustion, all influenced by the desire of self-conservation, said to him—"Sire, save your throne, and in saving that you will save everything."

The entreaties addressed to the Emperor were becoming more candid and more frequent. In short, the alarm increased from hour to hour. Napoleon not wishing to individualize the sacrifices he was willing to make, and counting on the pride of M. de Cau-

laincourt, and on his patriotism, sent him a *carte blanche*. This was the term used. He had well-founded hopes, from his knowledge of M. de Caulaincourt's character, that the latter would not see, in the *carte blanche*, authority to consent to great sacrifices, but if, however, great sacrifices were needed to snatch Paris from the hands of the enemy, he was free to act and might save the capital. Strange deception—practised with regard to himself, with regard to M. de Caulaincourt, with regard to his honour, as he understood it, for in the actual state of things, he either yielded nothing or he abandoned the natural frontiers; strange deception, and we must add, sole weakness of this great man, which was wrung from him by the importunities of his lieutenants and his ministers, and which, however, as we shall soon see, was but of short duration.

Having forwarded these additional powers to M. de Caulaincourt, the Emperor gave some orders suited to the extreme circumstances in which he was placed. The obstinate silence he had observed towards Murat had at length determined the latter to enter into negotiations with Austria. It was a defection as blameable as that of Bernadotte, but induced by less vicious motives. Inconstancy of character; the insatiable desire to reign; fear; an intense jealousy of Prince Eugene, had at first disturbed and at last corrupted the heart of Murat. His wife, it must be said, was much more guilty than he, for, bound to Napoleon by the closest bonds of duty, she had, when in converse with the French minister, affected the greatest grief and a total loss of influence with her husband, and was at the same time carrying on negotiations with the Allies through the intervention of M. de Metternich.* The conditions of Murat's treason were as follows: Murat was to keep Naples and give up Sicily, for which he would be indemnified by an Italian province. He promised in return to march with 30,000 men against Prince Eugene. He had kept his word, he had advanced towards Rome, had sent forward a division against Florence, another against Boulogne, without saying precisely what he was about to do, for he still retained sufficient good feeling to blush for his conduct, and he had sufficient craft to hide from the French officers, whose services he greatly needed, that he was going to employ them against France. He had asked General Miollis to give him up the castle of Saint-Ange, and had requested the Princess Eliza to let him take possession of the citadel of Leghorn, pretending that the occupation of these places was necessary to carrying out the Emperor's designs. General Miollis and the Princess Eliza had refused.

This intelligence, as may be easily conceived, had irritated Napoleon exceedingly, but he had dissembled his feelings through consideration for the numbers of French living in Italy. He had ordered the Duke of Otranto to visit Murat's head quarters again, and agree to the surrender of the fortified posts that the King of

*This sad fact, in the midst of so many others, can no longer be doubted, since the publication of Lord Castlereagh's papers. It is there quite evident that the queen was the principal agent in the negotiations.

Naples demanded; but he had sworn in his heart to be revenged for this black ingratitude, and he, on the spot, devised a means of embarrassing Murat in a most serious manner. Murat, in his treaty with Austria, had under the vague term of a province in the Peninsula, hoped to get possession of all central Italy. To send back the Pope to Rome at this moment would be to put an almost insurmountable obstacle in the way of Murat's ambition. Napoleon had, as we have already seen, sent Pius VII. to Savona, and the Pontiff had been along the way received by the people with the warmest expressions of respect and affection. Napoleon ordered that the Pope should be conducted to the outposts, with the respect with which he had always been treated, announcing to him that he was free to return to Rome. Thus finished this other drama, so similar to that of Spain, by the sending back of the Prince whose states the Emperor had designed to seize in taking possession of his person, and whom he was only too happy to set at liberty now, in the hope of drawing some advantage from a recantation, dictated by the embarrassment of his own circumstances.

But what was more important than either Murat or the Pope, was to profit of the opportunity of abandoning Italy to herself, another tardy retraction, but very useful if it had been made in time. As long as Murat continued inactive, Prince Eugene could, by defending himself on the Adige, keep his position in Lombardy, spite of some attacks made by the English on his right and his rear; but should Murat take him in the rear, on the right bank of the Po, he would have no further means of resistance, therefore Napoleon ordered him to fall back as speedily as possible on Turin, Suza, Grenoble, and Lyon, to come to the assistance of France, whose preservation was far more important than that of Italy.

Thus occupied in undoing what he had done, Napoleon gave his last orders with regard to Ferdinand VII., who was burning with impatience to recover his liberty. Intelligence had at length been received from the Duke of San Carlos. He had *en route* met the Spanish regency, that, after long hesitations, had quitted Cadiz and determined to come to Madrid and hold their sittings in the city, where, during three centuries, the Government of Spain had resided. The Duke of San Carlos had seen at Aranjuez the members of the regency and the principal personages of the Cortes. Their reply had been given without either doubt or hesitation. At first, none of them wished to separate from the English, with whom they hoped soon to invade the south of France; neither were they anxious to bring back Ferdinand VII., and restore him authority which they had conserved for him, and of which, it was very easy to foresee, he would soon make a bad use. Influenced by these combined motives, they refused to subscribe to a treaty made by a captive, and with many protestations of regret, obedience, and devotedness, they declared they could not consider themselves bound to recognize the signature of the King until he stood on Spanish soil, in the full enjoyment of his liberty. They cited, in justifica-

tion of their conduct, a very plausible reason, which was an article of the Constitution of Cadiz, which said expressly that any stipulation signed by the King in a state of captivity should be deemed void. The Duke of San Carlos had been sent back to Valençay with this article of the Constitution, upon which, the unfortunate Ferdinand seemed plunged into despair.

There was no longer time for hesitation; it was better run the risk of being deceived, but take, at the same time, the chance of finding Ferdinand VII. faithful to his word, than to detain him prisoner; a fact which was the radical cause of the war with the Spaniards, and obliged us to leave on the Adour, troops of which we had the most urgent need on the Marne and the Seine. Consequently, Napoleon commanded the liberation of Ferdinand VII. and the other Spanish princes detained at Valençay; he ordered that they should immediately join Marshal Suchet, requiring that they should pledge their word of honour for the faithful execution of the Valençay treaty. Napoleon was thus making an effort to recover the troops that garrisoned Sagonta, Mequinenza, Lerida, Tortosa, and Barcelona, who would immediately recross the Pyrenees. If Marshal Soult, who was detained at Bayonne by the presence of the English, could not be brought up to Paris, Marshal Suchet, who was not placed in similar circumstances, and who was opposed by an army infinitely less formidable, might be brought back to Lyon. Napoleon reiterated his orders, to send thither all the troops that were not indispensably necessary at Rousillon, and to prepare to follow himself with the rest of his army. Should Marshal Suchet arrive at Lyon with 20,000 men, and join Eugene with 30,000, the fate of the war would be evidently changed, for the Allies would not remain between Troyes and Paris when 50,000 old soldiers were advancing from Lyon to Besançon.

These orders being expedited during the days of the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th of February, days that Napoleon employed in observing the movements of the enemy, he also gave some others relative to the defence of Paris. The feeling of alarm went on increasing in this capital at every retrograde step made by Marshal Macdonald on the Marne, for the fugitives from the army and the surrounding country spread terror as they fled. Joseph had asked for instructions touching the Empress, the King of Rome, and the Princesses of the Imperial family; he asked whether in case of danger he should keep them in Paris. There was certainly no question of evacuating Paris; Napoleon had, on the contrary, given orders that it should be defended to the last extremity, but, if the enemy appeared, should one of the Princes remain with extraordinary powers and orders to resist to the last, and send beyond the Loire the Imperial family, the Empress, the King of Rome, the ministers, and chief dignitaries? This question was openly discussed in the streets of the capital, and proved how strongly the public mind was agitated. Louis, ex-King of Holland, who had returned to

France since the misfortunes of his brother, proposed, that should the court and members of the government leave, he would close the gates and make a determined defence, which he was very capable of doing. Many sensible people thought it would be better not to send away the Empress and the King of Rome, for their departure would be looked on as an abandonment of the capital, which would offend and alarm the Parisians, and would seem to prepare a void that would quickly be filled by the Bourbons. M. de Talleyrand, who clearly saw the reign of these Princes approaching, and had received many secret assurances of their kindly feeling towards himself, and though he neither liked them nor felt any confidence in their abilities, still he was revolving in his mind the means of recovering under their dynasty the influence he had lost with Napoleon; but as he did not wish to compromise himself too soon or irrevocable with the latter, he seconded Joseph and the Empress with great apparent zeal, giving them what he believed to be the best advice. In his opinion, to send away the Empress from Paris would be most imprudently to give up the place to the Bourbons, who would have in their favour the *prestige* of twenty-four years of misfortune, and the still greater *prestige* of the peace they would be instrumental in procuring France. Joseph, not wishing to take anything on himself in such a matter, had earnestly begged Napoleon to express his wishes positively on the subject. As to the Empress, she had neither opinion nor will, and in concert with Cambacérès, who, as we have seen, was become very pious, she ordered prayers to be said, which in the Catholic Liturgy are called the forty hours.

Napoleon, whom all the adversities of the war had not been able to shake, exhibited strong marks of impatience on receiving the courier from Paris, who brought him several times a day sad accounts of the uneasiness manifested by the members of his government. "You are afraid," he said to those to whom he had entrusted the administration, "and you infect those about you with the same fears. The position of affairs is serious, *but the danger does not lie where you think.* You do well to pray, but you pray like terrified people, and if I followed your example, my soldiers would believe themselves lost. Throw up round Paris the works I have ordered; arm and clothe my conscripts, make them practice target shooting, send them to me as fast as they shall have acquired the primary notions of a soldier's duties, seize the fugitives and draft them into the regiments, collect provisions and arms, keep yourselves cool, and do not change your opinion with every new idea thrown off in the heat of public excitement, keep my directions always before your eyes, obey them, and *leave the rest to me.* I know that some Cossacks have appeared near Sens, that Macdonald has allowed himself to be driven back on the Marne, but keep yourselves quiet, the enemy shall pay dearly for their mad temerity. Once more I say, keep yourselves quiet; do not listen to every one that offers advice, do not talk with the first comer, exert yourselves, keep your mind to yourself, and *leave the rest to me.*"

Such were the wise and energetic counsels that Napoleon addressed to Cambacérès, to the war minister, and to his brother Joseph. As to the Empress, he only gave her an account of his health, some succinct and tranquillizing details touching the army, all expressed in an affectionate and firm tone; but his resolution was taken as to what he should do with her and the King of Rome if the enemy appeared before Paris. He wished that the capital should be defended, for he knew very well that were it left open to the enemy, a government would be immediately established there, over which he would have no control; but though determined to dispute energetically the possession of the capital with the enemy, he had no intention of leaving his wife and son there. By keeping them in his possession he believed that he kept a bond with Austria that human respect would preserve intact. If, on the contrary, these precious pledges escaped from his hands, he said within himself that the Allies would not fail to seize upon Maria Louisa, and take advantage of her weakness to compose a regency that would exclude him from the throne, or the Austrians might bring her and the King of Rome to Vienna, and lavish every care on them, as people do to a virtuous girl who has had the misfortune to make a bad marriage. They would treat him as an adventurer who was not worthy of the wife they had given him, and he would perhaps be banished to some distant prison; and his son would be brought up at Vienna as an Austrian prince.

This prospective, as it rose before his mental vision, shook him to the very depths of his soul, and made him forget another, not less alarming prospect, that of Paris left vacant before the Bourbons, who were approaching. He was undoubtedly right, for it was true that his son and his wife would be taken from him, that his son would be educated as a foreign prince, and that his wife would be given to another husband; but it was not the less true that were Paris deserted, his enemies would take advantage of the circumstance to establish the Bourbons there. It was not such or such an evil that was to be apprehended; it was a conjunction of every species of evil, which in punishment of his faults, was by the decree of Providence about to descend on his devoted head.

His mind ever occupied with the danger of allowing his wife and son to fall into the hands of the Austrians, Napoleon ordered Joseph, in a letter dated the 8th February, to carry out his intentions as he had expressed them at parting, to leave Louis at Paris with extended authority, to remain there himself if necessary, to defend the capital to the last extremity; but to send up the Loire, the Empress and the King of Rome, with the princesses, the ministers, the grand dignitaries, the treasure of the crown, and not to give credence to secret enemies, such as M. de Talleyrand, with whom he had temporized too long. In short to follow his instructions, and not any others. "The fate of Astyanax," he added, "prisoner to the Greeks, has always appeared to me the most unhappy of all human destinies. I would rather see my son's throat cut, and his body flung into the Seine, than to see him in the hands of the Austrians to be led to Vienna."

Napoleon afterwards pointed out in what manner Paris was to be defended. As no defence in masonry had been erected, for fear of alarming the inhabitants, he contented himself with ordering palisades and artillery to be got ready. Now that the alarm was at the height, and that there was nothing left to conceal, he ordered the enclosure called "l'octroi" to be strengthened with palisades, and, together with the palisades, he ordered *tambours* to be constructed before the gates, and redoubts to be erected on the sites already indicated; these were to be protected by artillery, and behind these improvisatrised works, the National Guards were to be placed, armed with fowling pieces, should there be a deficiency of muskets. What confidence would he not have felt, what liberty of action would he not have acquired, had he those magnificent walls, which, thanks to a patriot king, now enclose the capital of France.

Napoleon had sojourned from the 3rd to the 8th February, first at Troyes, then at Nogent, foreseeing the commission of a fault by the enemy, from which he expected his safety. He soon thought he saw the first symptoms of what he expected. In fact, the morrow of the battle of Rothière, the Allies had held at Brienne a grand council, to consider what advantage they could draw from Napoleon's position, which seemed to them desperate. It was not to a force of 30,000 men, they had supposed him reduced after the battle of Rothière, but from 40,000 to 50,000, amounting with those of Mortier to perhaps 70,000, and with these numbers, so far above the reality, they thought him lost, provided, as they said, they did not commit any gross faults. After many discussions, the following plan of operations was resolved on.

Whatever might be the numerical superiority the Allies possessed over Napoleon, they always feared to encounter him face to face, and risk the fate of the war on a decisive battle. They wished to manœuvre and force him back on Paris, bringing up successively, all the allied armies to overwhelm him beneath a crushing mass of enemies, as they had done at Leipzig. There were on the right of the Allies, forces left to blockade the fortresses. There were, as we have said, the d'York corps left before Metz, the Langeron before Mayence, that of Kleist before Erfurt. These corps replaced by others, and ready to advance to the Marne, comprised that of d'York, which numbered 18,000 men; that of Langeron, 8,000, (only the half of this corps was disposable); that of Kleist, 10,000, that is to say, about 36,000 men, without reckoning Saint Priest's corps, and divers detachments of Bernadotte's, which were all at this moment falling back towards Belgium. It was not possible to leave the corps of d'York, Langeron, and Kleist isolated on the Marne, within range of Napoleon, instead of directing their services to the common object. It was agreed that Blucher should join these with more then 20,000 men still under his command, which would raise to about 60,000 the ancient army of Silesia, and give it an independent position. Blucher was to manœuvre at the head of this army on the Marne, and driving back Macdonald on Châlons,

Meaux, and Paris, he would find himself in the rear of Napoleon, who would be consequently obliged to fall back. Then Prince Schwarzenberg, who would have at least 130,000 men after the departure of Blucher, should follow Napoleon step by step in his retreat. If Napoleon turned on Prince Schwarzenberg, Blucher would take advantage of the movement, to make a fresh step forward, and thus advancing, the one along the Seine, the other along the Marne, they would finish as these rivers did, by meeting at Paris, where they would overwhelm Napoleon under the mass of the European armies assembled round the capital of France. In the meanwhile, they were so strong, even apart, that if Napoleon wished to fall on one of the two allied armies, either was sufficiently strong to make head against him. Blucher with 60,000 men thought he had nothing to fear. Prince Schwarzenberg, much less presumptuous, thought he could resist him with 130,000 men. Besides, at the distance they then were from Paris, the Seine and the Marne were sufficiently close to allow them to help one another, particularly as they had a large number of cavalry. It was agreed, in fact, that Prince Wittgenstein should take up a position on the Aube, where he would form a line of connection by means of the 6,000 Cossacks of General Sesliavin, on one side with Blucher, who was to march along the Marne, and on the other with Prince Schwarzenberg, who was to march along the Seine. With such precautions, they did not apprehend any misfortune, nor especially any of the accidents which might be expected when they had to do with the inventive genius of Napoleon. The Allies were perfectly contented with the apparent advantages of their position, and Blucher, who saw in the adopted combination his own independence, with the chance of arriving first at Paris, willingly consented to the arrangement, as did Schwarzenberg, who expected to gain thereby a deliverance from the most troublesome and the most imperious of his collaborators.

In consequence of these arrangements Blucher advanced on the 3rd from Rosnay to Saint-Ouen, on the 4th from Saint-Ouen to Fère-Champenoise, and finding d'York's corps already engaged with Marshal Macdonald near Châlons, he made every effort to get in advance of the Marshal, and by this means force him to retire on Epernay and Château-Thierry. Macdonald after his long retreat from Cologne to Châlons had only 5,000 foot and 2,000 horse. He was at Château-Thierry the 8th February, followed by d'York's corps along the Marne, and threatened in flank by Blucher, who, following the route of Fère-Champenoise and of Montmirail, hoped to get in advance of him at Meaux. Paris was thus left exposed to the enemy, and it was this evident danger that threw the inhabitants into the most intense alarm. Prince Schwarzenberg, on his side, after having carefully felt his way before Napoleon, whose slightest movement he feared, was advancing slowly on Troyes, having with his formidable adversary, rear-guard engagements, that were becoming every day more sharp. Suddenly, he conceived doubts

and uneasiness. He had just learned that French troops had appeared at a distance on his left, that is to say, on the Yonne, at Sens, at Joigny and at Auxerre—they were the troops of Pajol. Rumours had also reached him from more distant points. He had learned that a French army was being formed at Lyon under Marshal Augereau, that this army had assumed the offensive against Bubna, that the troops from Spain were seen coming *en poste*, that the heads of the columns were already near Orleans. He immediately asked himself whether Napoleon did not meditate some movement on his left flank beyond the Seine and the Yonne, and whether the Lyon army, the troops that were seen on the Yonne and those that were coming from Spain were not troops prepared for this dangerous movement. A prey to anxiety, he advanced a little towards the left, whilst Blucher advanced a little to the right, a movement that sensibly increased the space that separated them. Lastly, Prince Schwarzenberg brought Wittgenstein from the right bank of the Aube to the left, that is to say, from Arcis to Troyes; he left de Wrede before Troyes, with a reserve in the rear, he sent Giulay to Villeneuve-l'Archeveque, and Colloredo to Sens, flattering himself that by these precautions he protected his left flank. Some Cossacks had been left with the object of forming a connection between the two armies, but the intervening space was now much increased. This experienced general thinking that he was defending himself from one danger, was exposing himself, as we shall soon see, to another much more serious, for in war it is not one danger we must keep in view, but every; it is not one side of our position, it is the entire we ought to embrace with a wide-seeing, prompt and steady glance.

On the 6th and 7th February, Napoleon on the watch, like a tiger ready to spring upon his prey, kept an eye on his opponents with an ever-increasing joy, the last he was destined to experience. He had long hesitated between two courses. One moment he wished to throw himself on Colloredo and Giulay who had imprudently ventured between the Seine and the Yonne, then he thought of advancing along the Marne and attacking Blucher, but on the 7th he hesitated no longer. The importance of the results to be obtained by placing himself between Schwarzenberg and Blucher, and the necessity of aiding Macdonald and Paris as quickly as possible, decided him to advance along the Marne, and he commenced his movement against Blucher with unspeakable satisfaction. He had, by extraordinary exertion, from the 4th to the 7th of February, obtained some battalions from the depôts in Paris. He had with these resources somewhat recruited Marmont and Victor's corps as well as the divisions of Generals Gérard and Hamelinaye, and by the aid of detachments arrived from Versailles, he had somewhat reinforced his cavalry. Lastly, he ordered the first division that had arrived from Spain to march on Provins. On the 5th he had ordered Marmont to advance from Arcis on Nogent, and had repaired thither himself from Troyes, covering his move-

ments with strong rear guards, in order to hide his march from the enemy. Arrived at Nogent, he commenced to execute his design. Marmont, whose mind was active enough, had also conceived this same design, but in a confused manner, for he already regarded the execution as impossible, when Napoleon, without troubling himself about what was passing in his giddy head, ordered him on the 7th to set out from Nogent with a rear guard of cavalry and infantry and to advance on Sézanne, a place provided by the Emperor's orders with abundant resources. As soon as Marmont should have seen his way clearly, he was to be followed by his entire corps: On the 8th Napoleon despatched Ney with a division of the Young Guard and the cavalry of Lefebvre-Desnoëttes along this same route of Sézanne. He prepared to set out himself on the 8th with Mortier and the Old Guard. These three corps amounted to about 30,000 men.

However, whilst the troops were advancing along the Marne, Paris ought not to be left undefended on the Seine side. Napoleon left on the Seine Marshal Victor, with the 2nd corps; the Generals Gérard and Hamelinaye, with their divisions of reserve; and behind them at Provins, Marshal Oudinot, with the division of the Young Rothenbourg Guard and troops drawn from the army of Spain. Victor was charged to defend the Seine from Nogent to Bray, and Oudinot was to come to his assistance at the first sound of his cannon. Pajol, with the battalions that had arrived from Bordeaux, with the National Guards and his cavalry, were to keep watch over Montereau and the bridges of the Yonne as far as Auxerre. Lastly, the two divisions of the Young Guard, whose organization was now completed at Paris, had orders to take up a position between Provins and Fontainebleau. The total of these troops did not amount to less than 50,000 men, and those drawn up behind the Seine in the bend which this river forms from Nogent to Fontainebleau, would give Napoleon time to return and do against Schwarzenberg what he should have accomplished against Blucher. These plans were at the least as plausible as those of the adverse generals. It remains to be seen which corresponded best with the distances, time, and actual circumstances of the war. Napoleon set out on the 9th with his Old Guard to pass from the Seine to the Marne, ordering that his absence should be kept a profound secret. Full of hope, he wrote a few words to M. de Caulaincourt to raise his courage, and to induce him to use less freely the *carte blanche* that he had given him, without, however, lessening his powers. In fact, if the Emperor succeeded, the conditions of the peace would be very different. Consequently in setting off on this expedition, he carried with him the fortunes of France and his own!

Whilst the Emperor was marching towards Nogent, our unfortunate plenipotentiary suffered at Châtillon the greatest vexations that an honest man and a good citizen can experience, and was, at the same time, subjected to the most humiliating treatment.

The diplomatists of the coalition had arrived at Châtillon on the

3rd and 4th of February. They did not delay to visit M. de Caulaincourt, testifying the highest respect, which, they wished to be understood, was accorded to his personal character. It was agreed that the five should show their credentials, and that the negotiations should commence within a few days. Meanwhile, M. de Caulaincourt endeavoured at the dinners and soirées where they met, to obtain some information, but though polite, he found the members of the congress impenetrable. The only one amongst them to whom he could have opened his mind, in virtue of the secret communications of M. de Metternich, was M. de Stadion, the Austrian minister, but he was a personal enemy of Francis; the malevolent representative of a friendly court. Next to him, there was M. de Floret, lower in rank, but more friendly; but he spoke little, sighed often, and let it be understood that the battle of Rothière was a great error, for it deeply affected the position of affairs. As to the conditions of peace, though they could not be much longer concealed from us, M. de Floret said no more on the subject than the others. M. de Rasoumoffski, formerly the interpreter of Russian passions at Vienna, was almost impertinent about everything that did not personally touch M. de Caulaincourt. M. de Humbolt made no manifestation of his sentiments, still it was easy to see the Prussian in him, but, it must be admitted, in a mollified form. The most friendly of all the ministers were the English, especially Lord Aberdeen, a perfect model of the representative of a free state, by the simplicity of his manners and the mild gravity of his demeanour. Lord Castlereagh, who was not to take any part in the conferences, but was come to direct them, like a master who gives orders without making his appearance, had astonished M. de Caulaincourt by his pacific assurances and protestations of sincerity. He insisted so strongly and frequently on the fixed resolution of treating with Napoleon, that it was impossible to avoid perceiving the general policy of the English, which professes to make war for interests, purely national, and not in support of any dynasty. And so, Lord Castlereagh incessantly repeated that the plenipotentiaries could come to terms immediately, and, if they wished, an interview of one hour would be sufficient for the purpose. But on what bases were they to come to terms? On this point not one would consent to anticipate by a single day, the solemn declaration of the conditions of peace. "They must be very harsh," thought M. de Caulaincourt, "since they dare not produce them, and they no doubt wish to promulgate them as an European law, to which no contradiction is to be offered." Every time the French plenipotentiary endeavoured to gain any confidential information from a plenipotentiary, if by a chance that seldom occurred, he found himself alone with one, the latter broke off the conversation. If, in the society of several, he addressed one, the person addressed raised his voice, that no one might suspect him of having any secret intelligence with France. It was evident that all feared this ideal and formidable being called "the coalition," and that none would,

at any price, offend it. To say to the representative of France, or hear from him anything that was not common to all, would have appeared an infidelity, of which no person would dare to render himself guilty. Lord Castlereagh alone acting like a man, who was above all suspicion, saw and heard a few words in private from M. de Caulaincourt in their various interviews, but it was only to repeat this fastidious declaration that the Allies wished for peace, that it might be concluded in an hour, if the plenipotentiaries could only agree. Agree on what? Here was the everlasting question, to which no reply was given.

M. de Caulaincourt waited thus four mortal days without obtaining any explanation; he spent his time divining what was not expressed, and the result was repeated solicitations to the Emperor for fresh instructions. On the 5th February, the plenipotentiaries produced their credentials, declaring that the representatives of the four principal powers, Russia, Prussia, Austria, and England, would negotiate for the different courts of Europe, great and small, with which France was at war. This was a convenient mode of proceeding, but one that revealed the common yoke that weighed so heavily on all the members of the coalition. The representative of England announced, at the same time, that the question of maritime rights was not to be made a subject of negotiation, as it was a question that Great Britain would not submit to the discussion of anyone, not even of her Allies, because it was a question that did not depend on the fleeting resolution of man. The British representative would have willingly added that it was a dogma, about which no compromise could be made.

We were not in a position to offer any opposition, for we had at that moment things more important than maritime rights to defend. However, M. de Caulaincourt, for the honour of truth, made some observations, which were listened to in glacial silence, and obtained no reply. M. de Caulaincourt did not insist, and other business was proceeded with. It was agreed that during the sitting of this congress, every proposition should be made in writing, and replied to in the same manner, and if these propositions suggested any verbal observations, a protocol, kept with the greatest exactness, should conserve these observations. This was a new precaution to prevent distrust among the Allies. M. de Caulaincourt, offering no opposition to these formalities, begged that the plenipotentiaries would proceed to essentials, and declare the conditions of peace. But they would not, either that day or the following, open this grave subject, under pretext that they were not yet ready. At length, on the 7th, after causing M. de Caulaincourt these long delays, one of the plenipotentiaries, acting in the name of all, read in a solemn and peremptory tone, the following declaration:—

France was, as a first and most important condition, to retire within the limits of 1790, and never pretend to any authority over territories situate beyond these limits, and, moreover, she was not to interfere in the allotment that should be made of these countries,

so that not only would she be deprived of Holland, Westphalia, and Italy, which was natural enough, but she should forego her privilege as a first-rate power, to give an opinion on what was to become of these vast countries, and the Allies wished to act in this manner touching the kingdoms beyond the Rhine and the Alps, as well as for those that were on this side, so that in giving up Belgium and the Rhenish provinces, she was not to be consulted on what was to be done with them. Lastly, the French plenipotentiary was required to say "yes," or "no," before the negotiations were carried further. Never had a conquered nation been treated with such insolence, and conquered we were not yet, for at Brienne we had been conquerors, at Rothière 32,000 French had, during an entire day, kept in check 170,000 of the enemy, and the enemy had not been able to surround these 32,000 French, nor overwhelm them, nor cut off their retreat.

All present were so impressed with the enormity of these propositions that no person seemed willing to make a comment on them, those most hostile to France, fearing to weaken them by any commentary; the more moderate not wishing to undertake the task of justifying them. A profound silence succeeded this communication. M. de Caulaincourt, who could with difficulty control his emotion, declared that he had many observations to make, and demanded a hearing. After some hesitation, the sitting was adjourned to the evening of the same day, in order to hear M. de Caulaincourt.

Observations on this extraordinary communication came thronging to his mind. In the first place how could these propositions be reconciled with those of Frankfort, propositions that could not be denied, since to the recognized conversation of M. de Saint Aignan, there had been added a written note, which recapitulated them; since M. de Metternich, on receipt of M. de Bassano's evasive reply, had insisted on obtaining an explicit acceptation of the propositions! This acceptation having been sent, the authors of the Frankfort propositions were bound by their own act, and how was it possible that they could now make propositions so diametrically opposite? And still further, in considering these things with reference to the balance of power in Europe, how could the Allies, after having declared when they set foot on the soil of France, that they did not seek to contest her justly acquired greatness, how could they think of restricting her to the frontiers of the time of Louis XV., when since that period three of the Continental Powers had dismembered Poland, when since 1790 all the Continental Powers had made considerable acquisitions, which completely changed the proportions of the different states? If, in order to secure the peace of Europe, there had been a general return to the limits of 1790, was it not just that each state should restore what it had since acquired, that Austria should not think of retaining Venice; that Prussia and Austria should not keep what they had filched from the small German States, and especially from the ecclesiastical; princes that Prussia, Austria, and Russia should

restore the portions of Poland they had possessed themselves of at the last partition? Was it not, in fact, just, that England should restore the Ionian Isles, Malta, the Cape, the Mauritius, &c., &c.? To make France alone shrink back within her ancient limits, would be to destroy in Europe, to the general detriment, the necessary balance of power, and if, as experience has since proved, France might remain great, and very great, even after the loss of some provinces, she would owe it to the energy and intellectual power of her people, that is to say, to her moral grandeur, of which her enemies could not deprive her, though they might of her material greatness! Certainly there was nothing which conquerors might not assume the right to do, and this argument would cut short all discussion, but in such a case it would have been better not to utter these insidious words, of which the enemy made use on crossing the Rhine, and to avow that force and not justice was to serve as a rule of conduct to the Allied Powers. France would, in that case, have known what she had to expect from her invaders. But this was not all. How could the Allies demand immense sacrifices *en bloc* without entering into details, without determining the more or the less which was an important point in the case; for in the Low Countries, in the Rhenish provinces, along the Swiss and Alpine frontiers, there remained many questions, that according to the sense in which they were solved, would afford various results? And these portions of territory about to be given up, was it possible to abandon them without knowing to whom they would be ceded? To give them up, for example, to a great or a little power, to yield a territory on the left of the Rhine to a little state like Hesse, or to a large state like Prussia, would constitute an important difference. To refuse an explanation on any of these points was an unjustifiable proceeding, scarcely permissible with an enemy on whose throat the adversary's foot was already planted, and France, if unfortunately she was one day to find herself at the feet of her enemies, was not yet in that position. And if her respresentative submitted to all or part of these sacrifices, it could only be from a desire to put an immediate termination to a cruel war, to avoid a battle whose result would be perhaps decisive of the safety or total defeat of France; in short, to save Paris; but would it be possible to make these mournful sacrifices, unless M. de Caulaincourt was first assured that the moment he gave his consent, the Allies would instantly desist from their adverse proceedings?

These considerations, so natural, so indisputable, M. de Caulaincourt essayed to unfold on the evening of the 7th, and did so, under a feeling of bridled indignation. He was a soldier, and he would have preferred to die fighting side by side with the last soldier of France, against these insulting enemies, than vainly wrestle in a negotiation with men, who would neither listen nor reply to him. But he was willing to suffer everything to profit of an opportunity of making peace, if it occurred, and with the greatest calmness of manner, through which, however, his vexation of spirit was perceptible, he

referred to the Frankfort propositions, which had been formally proposed and formally accepted; he objected to the acquisitions, that the different powers had already made or intended to make in Poland, in Germany, in Italy, and above all, on the seas; he wished to know especially what was to become of the provinces of which France was to be deprived, and lastly what would be the recompense of the sacrifices to which France might consent; whether, for example, a suspension of hostilities would be the immediate consequence?

The first observations, those that referred to the Frankfort propositions, visibly embarrassed the ministers of the Allied Powers. In fact, no reply could be made, and if nations acknowledged any other umpire than force, the negotiators would be instantly condemned. M. de Rasoumoffski, the haughty Russian that represented the Emperor Alexander, replied that he did not know what was meant. M. de Stadion, who represented the Austrian cabinet, and was the principal and direct author of the Frankfort propositions, asserted that they were not mentioned in his instructions. But Lord Aberdeen, the most sincere and upright person present, who had witnessed the overtures made to M. de Saint-Aignan, who had discussed the terms of the Frankfort note, how could he deny these facts? So he limited himself to stammering forth some words that proved his embarrassment as an honest man, and then all these diplomatists opposing to the reasoning of the French minister a sort of general clamour, exclaimed with one voice that these questions were not under discussion, that the Frankfort propositions were not the subject before them, but those of Châtillon, that it was upon these, and not upon the others they were called to pronounce in the present sitting, that they were commissioned not to discuss but to present them, and to learn whether they would be accepted or rejected, and in a very decided manner they let it be understood that it was to be either peace or war, war to the death which should follow, that an immediate decision should be come to by replying on the spot either "yes," or "no." M. de Caulaincourt seeing there were no means of forcing an explanation from men who wanted a yes, or no, demanded an adjournment of the conference, which was accepted, and then the assembly broke up.

M. de Caulaincourt was alternately plunged in grief, or excited by indignation, for in the propositions that the plenipotentiaries had dared to present to him, the form was as insulting as the substance was disheartening. Certes, Napoleon had abused the rights of a victor, but never to this degree. He had often required a great deal from his enemies, but he had never humiliated them, and when on the morrow of the battle of Austerlitz, Alexander, who was on the point of being taken prisoner with his army, begged forbearance in a note written with pencil, Napoleon replied with a courtesy in which he was not now imitated. In any case, Napoleon was not France, the faults of the one were not the faults of the other, and people who laid such stress on regarding Napoleon as distinct from

France ought not to have made the latter suffer for the faults of the former. However this may be, M. de Caulaincourt saw very clearly that to stop the onward march of the Allies he would be obliged to pronounce these terrible words of a pure and simple acceptation of the proposed terms; but to bar the entrance of the enemy into Paris he was ready to use the unlimited powers with which he was furnished. This excellent citizen, devoted to France and the Imperial dynasty, committed now the error (perhaps the first with which he could be charged) of thinking more of Napoleon's throne than of his glory. He totally forgot that it would be more glorious for Napoleon to perish than to cede the natural frontiers; that the question involved his honour as well as the true greatness of France, and that however unfortunate she might afterwards become, no greater sacrifice could be demanded of her than that actually required; that even under the Bourbons she would be allowed the frontiers of 1790, and that consequently, for Napoleon as for France, it would have been as well to risk everything; and the noble-minded M. de Caulaincourt, who had been so often in the right when his master was in the wrong, happened on this occasion not to perceive so clearly as the Emperor the true position of things. He was, therefore, ready to yield, one condition always understood—an assurance that the enemy would immediately cease hostilities. But to yield everything demanded, without a certainty of saving Paris and the Imperial throne, was, in his eyes, an afflicting humiliation, without any compensation. In his despair he had recourse to the only one amongst the plenipotentiaries in whom the feelings of a man were discernable beneath the frigid reserve of the diplomatist; he tried to learn from him whether the terrible sacrifice demanded by the Allies, would at least procure a suspension of hostilities. Lord Aberdeen, to whom he applied, taking all possible care, according to agreement, to avoid any private communication with the French representative, gave him to understand, however, that a suspension of hostilities could only be obtained by an immediate and unreserved acceptation of the proposed terms, and that hostilities should cease only on the ratification of the acceptance of these terms. This was almost asking an unconditional surrender, and that too without being sure of life being spared, because in the interval between the acceptation and ratification, a decisive battle might take place, and the fate of France be decided by arms. It was therefore not worth while to have recourse to political precautions, since they would form no defence against the intervention of force. Thus, though M. de Caulaincourt had a *carte blanche*, he dared not give a formal consent to the acceptation that the Allies wished to force from him, and he wrote to head-quarters to communicate his anxieties to Napoleon; but the very next day he received from the Russian plenipotentiary the extraordinary declaration that the sittings of the Congress were suspended. The Emperor Alexander, it was said, wished to have some fresh communications with his Allies, before any further conferences were held. This last intelligence threw M. de Caulaincourt com-

pletely into despair. He fancied he now saw the downfall of Napoleon irrevocably determined, and in his profound grief he wrote to M. de Metternich in the strictest confidence, to ask whether in case he made use of his powers and accepted the imposed conditions, he would obtain a suspension of hostilities. This was perhaps making too open an exhibition of his despair; this despair it was true, was that of an honest man and an excellent citizen, and the avowal was made to the only one amongst the diplomatists who was not anxious to abuse the privileges of victory; but there are positions in which men must hide beneath a stern exterior the noblest sentiments of their souls. M. de Caulaincourt had nothing more to do than await a reply from M. de Metternich on one side, from Napoleon on the other.

In the state in which things then were, it was only the cannon placed between the Seine and the Marne, and the silence at Châtillon which could operate any change in this horrible position of affairs. Napoleon was *en marche*, and in setting out, he had sent word to M. de Caulaincourt not to be in a hurry. He was on the eve of playing his last stake, and he did it with the confidence of an experienced gambler, who does not doubt the success of his last calculations.

We have seen in the preceding pages, the position of the armies when Blucher quitted Prince Schwarzenberg, whilst Napoleon keeping an eye upon him, was lying in wait at Nogent-sur-Seine. The Prussian General, d'York, descended the Marne in pursuit of Marshal Macdonald, who, threatened in the rear by d'York and on the flank by Blucher, had no other resource than to retire rapidly on Meaux. Blucher, marching at equal distance from the Marne and the Aube, through Fère-Champenoise and Montmirail, had sent Sacken forward, and followed with Olsouvieff, Kleist, and Langeron. On the 9th February Macdonald had retired to Meaux, the position of the enemy being as follows: General d'York with 18,000 men was at Château-Thierry on the Marne; Sacken with 20,000 Russians was on the Montmirail road; Olsouvieff with 6,000 Russians at Champaubert, and lastly in the rear, at Etoges, Blucher with 10,000 men of Kleist and 8,000 of Capzewitz, these latter constituting the remains of Langeron. Here were at least 60,000 men dispersed between Châtillon and Ferté-sous-Jouarre, a part on the Marne and part on the road that separates the Aube from the Marne. If Napoleon, whose clear-visioned glance had foreseen this state of things, could only fall opportunely on forces so dispersed, he might obtain the most unforeseen and important results.

By a most fortunate chance—fortune's last favour—Champaubert, through which Napoleon was to reach the Montmirail road, was only guarded by 6,000 of Olsouvieff's Russians. He found the point nearly unprotected by which he could advance into the midst of his enemies, and found himself in a position to say that he had hit Achilles in the heel. On the 7th February he ordered Marmont to advance with a portion of his cavalry and his infantry, and

march from Nogent on Sézanne, informing him that he was about to follow in person. On the 8th he sent forward in the same direction a division of the Young Guard and a part of the cavalry of the Guard under Marshal Ney. On the 9th he set out himself with the Old Guard under Mortier, and passed the night at Sézanne. The way from Nogent to Champaubert was a cross-road, badly kept, as at that time all the second-rate roads in France were, and beyond Sézanne it was almost impracticable for heavy waggons. At two leagues from Sézanne, at Saint-Prix, we find the extremity of the Saint-Gond marshes, and in the midst of these marshes we see the little river called Petit-Morin, which runs at the foot of the high grounds, crossed by the chausée that passes from Montmirail to Meaux. The artillery found great difficulty on the 9th in reaching Sézanne. They, moreover, met Marshal Marmont, who had at first exulted in the idea of throwing himself into the midst of Blucher's scattered corps, and who, after having advanced on the 7th as far as Chapton, had suddenly turned back, declaring the marshes of Saint-Gond impassable, the high grounds covered with enemies, the plan a failure, &c., &c. Napoleon troubled himself little about the Marshal's change of opinion,* and ordered the

* We think it our duty to enter here into some details on a historical question, suggested by Marshal Marmont's Memoirs relative to the affairs of Champaubert, Montmirail, Vauchamps, &c. This Marshal, whose intellect was more brilliant than solid, died with the conviction on his mind, that he was the author of the brilliant tactics displayed at Montmirail, tactics that procured Napoleon, on the eve of his downfall, five or six of the most glorious days of his existence. We shall see on what the Marshal founded his opinion, and on what grounds he relates the circumstance in his Memoirs. He had been staying at Arcis-sur-Aube and at Nogent-sur-Seine from the 2nd to the 6th February, and whilst in these places he perceived the movement of Blucher, and with natural instinct, he wrote to Napoleon, proposing to attack the Prussian General. On the 7th he received orders to advance on Sézanne, and even with less *amour-propre* than he possessed, he might have believed himself the instigator of this brilliant manœuvre. This is what he relates in his Memoirs, quoting his own letters and those he has had in reply, and in these details he is perfectly correct. But he does not add two circumstances, one of which he was ignorant of, and the other he had perhaps forgotten, but both of which totally alter the aspect of the case. In the first place, it was not until the 6th that he wrote to Napoleon, whilst the Emperor had on the 2nd announced his project to the War Minister, a project that was at the same time his last remaining hope, and depended on an error of the enemy, which Napoleon, with his eagle glance, foresaw before it was committed. From the 2nd to the 6th he had arranged everything according to his own views, without saying anything on the subject to Marshal Marmont, who knowing nothing of what Napoleon was thinking and writing, believed himself the sole author of the projected combination. Besides, Marshal Marmont does not relate, how, having arrived at Chapton, he lost courage, fancied the movement impossible, turned back, and on the 9th wrote Napoleon a letter of four pages, advising him to abandon the project, of which, during his remaining life, he believed himself the author. Napoleon, as we have seen, laid little stress on what had alarmed Marmont, because he viewed things as a whole, certain that if there were some thousand men at Champaubert, it was not possible that Blucher's 60,000, of whom he had received intelligence at the same time from Vertus, Etoges, Montmirail, and Château-Thierry, could be all at Champaubert, he therefore advanced, convinced that he would reach his destination, and urged besides by the powerful motive, that in his situation it was necessary to risk everything for the success of this grand movement. We shall now see who was right, he or his lieutenant, and who was really the author of the admirable operation in question. We have already furnished many proofs of the difficulty of arriving at historical truth, and the fact we are now discussing is a fresh example. Yet Marshal Marmont was an

troops to march *en masse* on the little village of Saint-Prix, crossed by the *Petit-Morin*, and to surmount, at any cost, the local difficulties. He had received reports from various quarters which proved that there were Russians at Montmirail, that there were some in the rear at Etoges, and that there were Prussians on the Marne. Knowing with what enemies he had to do, he was convinced that they would not march so as to present on every side an impenetrable mass. Having, with Marmont, Ney, and Mortier, 30,000 of his best troops, he was certain that by choosing judiciously the point of attack and bringing all his forces to bear upon it, he would soon find himself in the midst of the enemy. But there was one dangerous step to make, it was to cross the marshy lands that lie between Sézanne and Saint-Prix. The local authorities, when called on, promised to assemble all the horses of the country. The peasants, animated by the best sentiments, and above all, exasperated by the presence of the enemy, thronged in crowds, and at ten in the morning were ready between Sézanne and the *Petit-Morin* to aid with their hands and horses.

On the 10th of February at the break of day, the troops set forward. Marmont marched at the head with the cavalry of the 1st corps and the Ricard and Lagrange divisions, comprising the 6th infantry corps. In approaching the *Petit-Morin*, the marshy surface yielded considerably; but the peasants, by the aid of hands and horses, extricated the cannon, and all arrived safely at the bridge of Saint-Prix. Some of Olsouvieff's sharpshooters were posted along the borders of the *Petit-Morin;* the French dispersed them and crossed the bridge. The cavalry of the 1st corps advanced in full trot. Having passed the *Petit-Morin*, they entered a valley at the bottom of which lies the village of Baye. On ascending the opposite side of this valley, we find a kind of plateau, in the midst of which stands Champaubert. Olsouvieff provided with abundant artillery, had placed on the border of the plateau twenty-four pieces of cannon that commanded the valley through which the French were making their way. The cavalry of the 1st corps dashed forward, spite of Olsouvieff's cannonade, rushed on the village of Baye, followed by Ricard's cavalry. Horse and foot entered the village *pêle mêle*, and ascended the heights close in the rear of the Russians. There was, a little to the left, another village, called Bannai, and here the Russians were posted in great strength. The Guard marched thither and expelled them. The French commander could now deploy his forces on the plateau, whose surface is tolerably

intelligent man, an eye witness, and in a position to say: "I was there." This is why Napoleon in one of his letters says with as much wit as penetration, that *his officers knew what he did on the field of battle as correctly as the strollers in the Tuilleries knew what he wrote in his cabinet*, which implies that he alone, embracing in his glance the entirety of the operations, knew the motive of each. And for this reason, it is in his orders and his correspondence that we must seek this secret, and not in the thousand recitals of eye-witnesses, which have undoubtedly a legendary value, but restricted, touching only the material fact operated before their eyes, and rarely extending to the true significance of the fact.

even, sprinkled here and there with clusters of trees; and now the Montmirail road was discernible; of this it was needful we should take possession. The road ran from our right to our left, from Châlons to Meaux, crossing the village of Champaubert that lay before us. We were nearly a league distant from this important point.

At this moment the French discovered a corps of Russian infantry about 6,000 strong, accompanied by a great deal of artillery, but very little cavalry, retiring precipitately, but in tolerable order. General Olsouvieff, who commanded this corps, had just learned that Napoleon was advancing at the head of considerable forces; he perceived his danger to be extreme and became alarmed.

Napoleon had hastened to Marmont, whose infantry was advancing flanked by the 1st cavalry corps. The important point was to reach the Montmirail road as soon as possible, and expel the enemy, who occupied it. In any case, the movement was of great importance, for if Blucher had already got in advance of our left in the direction of Meaux, we could cut him off from Châlons and his line of retreat; if he had remained in the rear of our right we should cut him off from any of his lieutenants who might have got in advance of him, and we should thus advance into the midst of the army of Silesia, with an almost certainty of destroying it piecemeal. When Napoleon arrived, Marmont had just sent forward the 1st corps of infantry on the right; Napoleon despatched in the same direction, General Girardin, with the two squadrons he had brought with him, to disperse some groups that were retiring along the Châlons road. The alarm of the enemy redoubled at this aspect, and they retired precipitately. Marmont, with his infantry, pushed them briskly on Champaubert, and General Doumerc with the cuirassiers charged them in the plain on the right. The Russians, completely routed, threw themselves in disorder into Champaubert. Marmont entered the village at the head of Ricard's infantry, with fixed bayonets, whilst the cuirassiers of Doumerc, turning to the right, cut off all communication with Châlons. Olsouvieff, driven out of Champaubert by our infantry, and flung on our left by the cuirassiers, was at the same time separated from Blucher, who had remained behind at Etoges, and thrown back on Montmirail, where there was no other resource than to take refuge with Sacken, who was at a great distance, and might already have sought shelter behind the Marne. In this embarrassment, Olsouvieff had retired near a lake, surrounded with trees; this place was called "the Desert." Ricard debouching direct from Champaubert, and Doumerc advancing from the right to the left, fell upon him. In an instant his infantry gave way and were partly cut in pieces by the cuirassiers, partly made prisoners. 1,500 killed or wounded, nearly 3,000 prisoners, amongst whom were General Olsouvieff and his staff, together with twenty pieces of cannon, were the trophies of this glorious day. This was fortune's first favour since the commencement of the campaign, and it was a great one, less

from the immediate result obtained, than from the ulterior results that might be hoped. In fact, according to the report of prisoners interrogated by Napoleon himself, it was ascertained that Blucher was in the rear, that is to say, at Etoges; that Sacken was in front, in the direction of Montmirail, that d'York was higher up towards the Marne; and that consequently the French were now in the midst of the army of Silesia, that in the succeeding days a great quantity of booty would be obtained, and perhaps the aspect of affairs totally changed.

And now Napoleon experienced an emotion of deep-seated joy. He had felt nothing like it for a long time. After having doubted of everything, he, who during so many years had never doubted anything, Napoleon's faith in his good fortune revived, and he began to think himself nearly re-established on the pinnacle of his greatness. Supping at Champaubert in a village inn, with his marshals, he spoke of the vicissitudes of fortune with that cheerful philosophy we all experience when evil days give place to good, and in a rare outburst of confidence he exclaimed:—"If to-morrow I should be as fortunate as I have been to-day, within fifteen days I shall drive the enemy back upon the Rhine, and from the Rhine to the Vistula there is but a step." This was his last transport of joy, which we must not grudge him, and we would share it with him were the *dénoûement* of this great drama not so well known to the present generation.

The mode of proceeding on the following day, which might have suggested some doubts to another, was quite clear to Napoleon. Fallen like a thunderbolt in the midst of the enemy's columns, he might have hesitated as to which he should first attack, that of Blucher on the right, or that of Sacken on the left. If he advanced immediately towards the right, Blucher had the means of escape by falling back on Châlons, whilst that by marching to his left he was certain of reaching Sacken, who would be caught between Champaubert and Paris, and, moreover, in overwhelming Sacken, he would draw Blucher towards him, for the Prussian General would not certainly allow his lieutenants to be overpowered without hastening to their assistance. Taking in with his ordinary quickness of perception, every aspect of his position, Napoleon, on the morning of the 11th, advanced without any hesitation to the left, followed the Montmirail road, and left on his right, in front of Champaubert, Marshal Marmont, with the Lagrange division and 1st cavalry, to restrain Blucher, whilst he should engage Sacken and d'York, whom he might meet apart or combined.

Napoleon arrived about ten in the morning at Montmirail, at the head of his column, amounting to nearly 24,000 men, with Ney, Mortier, the cavalry of the Guard, and the Ricard division. He crossed Montmirail, and debouched on the high road, where he took up his position opposite the Russian troops, who were hurrying forward. It was Sacken turning on us with his accustomed impetu-

osity. What had taken place amongst the Allies is fully descriptive of the confusion and worthlessness of their counsels.

Blucher, as we have seen, had advanced along the Marne to surround Macdonald, whom the Generals d'York and Sacken were briskly pursuing, the one upon the right bank of this river, the other along the left, after which, the army of Silesia, Macdonald being defeated, was to advance on Paris, the object of the ardent longings of the Allies. Meanwhile, Schwarzenberg was to advance towards the capital, along the course of the Seine, and as we have already said, he had inclined a little towards the Yonne, and so increased the space that separated him from Blucher. Fearing that Blucher might reach Paris before him, he had begged him, at the earnest entreaty of the Emperor Alexander, to stop outside the walls of Paris, and await the allied sovereigns there. Surely such presumption and inconsistency deserved chastisement.

Blucher had received these orders at the same moment that he learned the arrival of Napoleon at Sézanne, and he did not know what to do, for impetuosity is not clearness of perception, especially when one is called on to choose between two courses equally perilous. General Gneisenau was of one opinion, General Muffling of another. They had tried to induce Sacken to come up, passing through the French columns; an order which offered no special means of safety, was, to fall back on Montmirail, or to take refuge behind the Marne with General d'York, should the danger be so great as was said. If, on the contrary, they had been alarmed without cause, Sacken was authorized to set out in pursuit, passing through Ferté-sous-Jouarre, towards Paris. On receiving intelligence of the sudden appearance of Napoleon, Sacken, instead of retiring behind the Marne, retraced his steps, in order to have the honour of fighting the Emperor of the French, and had invited General d'York to cross the Marne at Château-Thierry, and advance along the Montmirail route to witness or assist at his triumph. General d'York had only accepted this invitation in part, and had advanced a short way towards Montmirail, but always supporting his rear on Château-Thierry.

Napoleon having debouched by the Montmirail route, saw Sacken, who was returning from Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and perceived at a distance on his right, troops that were coming from the banks of the Marne by the Château-Thierry route, but who did not appear in a hurry to take part in this grave business. These were General d'York's troops. The first operation to be executed was to bar Sacken's way and get rid of him, and afterwards attack the other comer, who was discernible in the direction of Château-Thierry. The French were still on the plateau they had ascended the previous evening in taking possession of Champaubert, and in advancing on Montmirail they had on their left the declivity of this plateau, whose foot was bathed by the Petit-Morin. About half way down this declivity the little village of Marchais is situate. Napoleon placed Ricard's division here to oppose Sacken on this side, whilst

that on the high road he had deployed his artillery and posted his cavalry *en masse*. In this attitude the Ricard infantry defending at Marchais the extremity of the plateau, the cavalry and artillery intercepting the high road, Napoleon could wait the junction of Ney and Mortier, who had remained behind.

Sacken having arrived with his 20,000 men, and seeing the high road occupied, perceived that it would not be so easy as he had at first thought to overthrow Napoleon in order to join Blucher. He now only thought of cutting his way through the enemy. The high road appeared to be blocked up by a compact mass of cavalry. On his right and our left, he saw along the woody declivities that slope towards Petit-Morin, a possible outlet, of which he could make himself master, by seizing the little village of Marchais. He directed a strong column of infantry towards this village, whilst he was endeavouring to take possession of small clusters of houses and farms also situate on the side of the high road, and called "l'Epine-aux-Bois" and "Haute-Epine." A brisk engagement took place at the village of Marchais, between the column of infantry sent by Sacken and the Ricard division. The latter made a vigorous resistance, lost and retook the village, and finished by keeping possession, whilst the mass of our cavalry posted on the high road, protected our numerous artillery, and was in return protected by them.

It was now two o'clock in the afternoon. The roads were frightfully bad, and the Guard had found great difficulty in traversing them. The first division of the Old Guard, under Friant, having at length reached the plateau, Napoleon prepared to deal the enemy a mortal blow. Sacken had strongly occupied l'Epine-aux-Bois, situate like the village of Marchais on the flank of the high road, but a little more forward in relation to us. This position seemed difficult to carry without great loss of life, but once carried, everything was decided, for the enemy's troops that had advanced on our left, between Marchais and the Petit-Morin, would inevitably be made prisoners, and Sacken had no other resource than to sacrifice them, and take refuge with the *debris* of his corps, near General d'York on the Marne. Napoleon, in order to render the attack on l'Epine-aux-Bois less bloody, made a feint of yielding the position near Marchais, in the intention of drawing Sacken thither, and thus inducing him to withdraw some of his troops from l'Epine-aux-Bois. At the same time he put his cavalry in movement, which had hitherto remained motionless on the high road. These orders, given with vigorous precision, were executed in the same manner.

At a signal from Napoleon, Ricard made a feint of falling back and abandoning Marchais, whilst Nansouty advanced with the cavalry of the Guard. At this sight Sacken hastened to profit of the advantage he fancied he had obtained, and with a portion of his centre, quitted l'Epine-aux-Bois, to seize Marchais, leaving on the high road only a detachment, for the purpose of keeping up a communication with General d'York. Seizing the opportunity,

Napoleon despatched Friant with the Old Guard to l'Epine-aux-Bois. These old soldiers, who combined the fire with the self-possession of tried courage, advanced without firing a shot, crossed a little ravine that separated them from l'Epine-aux-Bois, and then advanced with fixed bayonets. In the twinkling of an eye they made themselves masters of the position, and cut down all who opposed them. During the performance of this vigorous act, Nansouty, after having advanced along the high road, turned suddenly to the left to oppose the troops of Sacken, who had overpassed l'Epine-aux-Bois, made a desperate charge upon them, and scattered some in the direction of the Petit-Morin, and obliged the others to fall back. The latter, obliged to retreat, still fighting, left in serious danger the troops that were engaged on our left, between Marchais and the Petit-Morin. Napoleon then ordered Bertrand, with two battalions of the Young Guard, to advance on the village of Marchais to assist Ricard to retake the place. These battalions, rallying Ricard's infantry, entered Marchais with fixed bayonets, whilst the cavalry of the Guard, under General Guyot, pursued and sabred the fugitives. In consequence of these combined movements, all who had ventured between the high road and the Petit-Morin, were either made prisoners or killed, even on the flank of the plateau. In the space of a few minutes, from four to five thousand prisoners were made, thirty pieces of cannon were taken, and our cavalry left between two and three thousand men dead on the plain. Sacken had no other means of safety than a hasty retreat, and, under favour of night, to repass from the left to the right of the high road (left and right with regard to us), and rejoin General d'York, who had advanced cautiously, but whom Napoleon had held in check near the village of Fontenelle, by sending thither the second division of the Old Guard, under General Mortier.

This day—the 11th—named from Montmirail, was still more brilliant than the preceding. Out of 20,000 men, Sacken had lost 8,000, either killed, wounded, or made prisoners, and this glorious triumph had cost us at the utmost only 700, or 800 men, for the old soldiers Napoleon had employed on this occasion knew how to manage, so as to inflict much injury on the enemy, without sustaining great loss themselves. The succeeding days promised still greater results, for the entire army of Blucher, taken in detail, was about to receive the chastisement due to presumption.

Everything indicated that Sacken, flying towards the Marne, was about to rejoin the Prussian General d'York, near Château-Thierry, and that consequently it was in that direction the French ought to march. Thus the third part of the army of Silesia was now in its turn isolated, and forced in this state to confront Napoleon. The next day, in fact, the 12th of February, Napoleon set out with the second division of the Old Guard, under Mortier, one division of the Young Guard, under Ney, and all the cavalry, thinking

these forces sufficient to overthrow an enemy already in disorder. He left behind, in the direction of Montmirail, the first division of the Old Guard, under Friant, another of the Young Guard under Curial, in order, if needful, to succour Marmont, who was left in front of Blucher, and to have forces within reach of the Seine, should the necessity arise of hastening thither to stop Schwarzenberg's progress. The excellence of Napoleon's tactics consisted in only doing what was indispensable, in doing it at a proper time, quickly, and with energy.

He set out on the 12th of February, and quitted the Montmirail road, which runs parallel to the Marne, to advance in a perpendicular direction on that river. He there found General d'York with about 18,000 Prussians and 12,000 Russians—the remains of Sacken's corps—formed in column on the Château-Thierry route. The greater part of the enemy's infantry was massed behind a stream near the village of Caquerets. A company of the Guard, acting *en tirailleurs* a little below the village, dispersed the enemy's sharp-shooters, crossed the stream, and forced the Prussians to retreat. The French passed through the village and advanced into the plain, the two infantry divisions and the Guard deployed. Napoleon, who had brought up the cavalry on his right, ordered them to advance in full gallop on the flank of the enemy's infantry and reach Château-Thierry before them. This order was immediately executed. At sight of this, General d'York sent his cavalry to resist ours, but General Nansouty, with the squadrons of the Guards of Honour, and those of the Guard, rushed on the Prussian cavalry, threw them back on Château-Thierry, sabred a part and captured all the light artillery. Nothing could equal the ardour of our brave horsemen, whose courage was raised to the highest point by a sense of the danger that threatened France and their devotedness to the Emperor himself.

During this rapid movement, made by our cavalry in order to reach Château-Thierry before General d'York, we had succeeded in separating from the main body of the enemy a rear guard of three Prussian and four Russian battalions. General Letort, commanding the Dragoons of the Guard, anxious to surpass, if possible, all that the cavalry had performed for some days past, charged the seven battalions with five or six hundred horses, broke their lines, killed a great number, and took 3,000 prisoners, with a great quantity of artillery. Infantry and cavalry then threw themselves, *en masse*, on Châlons. Prince William of Prussia had advanced with his division, to prevent us continuing the pursuit. He was in his turn overthrown, after a loss of 500 men. The French entered Château-Thierry *pêle-mêle* with the enemy, and made many prisoners. The inhabitants, irritated at the conduct of the Prussians, intoxicated at the same time with joy and anger, gave no quarter to d'York's soldiers, now surprised in an isolated position; they killed or led them prisoners to Napoleon. Unfortunately, the enemy had destroyed the bridge of Château-Thierry, which stopped short our

pursuit. Napoleon had still one hope. In setting out to execute this succession of movements, he had informed Marshal Macdonald what he was about to do, had ordered him to pause at Meaux, and in whatever condition his troops might be, to return by the right bank of the Marne, promising that he would find there the finest booty imaginable.

Arrived at Château-Thierry, Napoleon waited with confidence, employing the time in re-constructing the bridge of the Marne, and reckoning that Macdonald, who ought to appear on the other side, would capture thousands of prisoners, and a vast quantity of artillery. But the day passed and Macdonald did not appear. This Marshal, who was accustomed to regular warfare, in which he excelled, felt irritated against Napoleon, his generals, and his soldiers, because that he had been brought from the banks of the Rhine to the gates of Paris with 6,000 men in a state of disorder, and instead of attributing these mischances to circumstances, he found fault with everybody, and wholly occupied with the state of his troops, instead of making use of them as they were, he had employed his time in re-organizing them with the resources he had received from Meaux. He consequently did not appear on the right bank of the Marne at the decisive moment that Napoleon wished to see him.

This disappointment, which somewhat curtailed the consequences of Napoleon's grand manœuvre, could not, however, prevent the great results it had already produced. He had conquered, without losing more than 1,000 men, three of Blucher's corps, and there only remained one more to strike—that of Blucher himself—in order to have overthrown in detail the army of Silesia, one of the two that threatened the empire, and this too, the most formidable, if not in number, at least in energy. He had already captured from 11,000 to 12,000 men, and killed or wounded from 6,000 to 7,000. Should Blucher too, take a place amongst the conquered, Napoleon would have nothing left to desire touching the army of Silesia.

Napoleon, as indefatigable now as in the palmy days of his youth, resolved not to lose a moment in deriving from this series of operations, all the advantages that he might still hope. He employed the remainder of the 12th and the greater part of the 13th in repairing the bridge of the Marne, in order to send Mortier, in the absence of Macdonald, towards Soissons in pursuit of d'York and Sacken's corps, and whilst he watched over these arrangements, he kept his eye fixed on Montmirail, where Marmont was placed in advance of Blucher to observe his movements, nor did he forget the Marshals Victor and Oudinot, who were stationed on the Seine, with orders to keep Schwarzenberg in check, On the Montmirail side Blucher had given no signs of life, and Marmont had remained at Etoges without attempting an attack. On the Seine side the situation of things was less peaceful. Prince Schwarzenberg, after having allowed his troops to repose for a short time at Troyes, marched them along the Seine, where he occupied the sweep be-

tween Méry and Montereau, and tried to force a passage at Nogent-sur-Seine, at Bray, and even at Montereau. Marshals Victor and Oudinot resisted to the utmost of their power with the resources Napoleon had left them, but earnestly requested his return. He every day gave them intelligence of his proceedings, and each succeeding day brought better news; he encouraged them to hold their ground, promising to return to their assistance as soon as he should have finished with Blucher.

Napoleon had thus passed thirty-six hours at Château-Thierry, when, on the night between the 13th and 14th, he received from Marmont the serious but gratifying intelligence that Blucher, who, during the three days of the 10th, 11th, and 12th had remained motionless, had at length resumed the offensive, and was marching on Montmirail, probably at the head of considerable forces. Napoleon immediately set out. He had, as we have seen, left at Montmirail, Friant, with the strongest of the Old Guard, Curial, with a division of the Young Guard, and had ordered the Leval division that was coming from Spain to advance to the same point. A cavalry division, drawn from all the depôts, combined at Versailles, had also arrived at Montmirail. Napoleon ordered all these troops to advance from Montmirail to Champaubert, to support Marshal Marmont. He sent thither from Château-Thierry Musnier's infantry division of the Young Guard, and all the cavalry of the Guard under the command of Ney. At the same time he despatched towards Soissons, Mortier, with the second division of the Guard, with Colbert's lancers, and the guards of honour of General Defrance, ordering him to pursue *à outrance*, the conquered troops of Generals d'York and Sacken; he then set off in full gallop, in order to reach the place of destination before the troops that he was bringing. He arrived about nine in the morning at Montmirail, and found everything just as he could have wished, for it seemed that in these latter days fortune could refuse him nothing that could tend to render his triumphs more glorious.

Blucher, after having waited intelligence from d'York and Sacken during the 11th and 12th, flattering himself that they had fallen back safe and sound on the Marne, had at length thought of coming to their assistance, by advancing to Montmirail, with the troops of Capzewitz, the Prussian corps of Kleist, and the remains of d'Olsouvieff's corps. These troops, amounted in all to 18 or 20,000 men. Blucher had, besides, sent to Prince Schwarzenberg, begging him to send the Wittgenstein detachment across through Sézanne, confident that with this detachment, and with the troops under his command, he could effect on Napoleon's rear a diversion strong enough to free d'York and Sacken, who would thus be put in a position to remount the Marne, and join him through Epernay and Châlons. This was an irrationable mode of reasoning, for in advancing in this way, he might encounter Napoleon, just victorious over Olsouvieff, Sacken, and d'York, and returning with his

combined forces to throw himself on the general of the army of Silesia, and conquer the chief after having conquered his lieutenants.

On the morning of the 13th, Blucher had quitted Vertus, ascended the plateau on which Champaubert and Montmirail are situate, and forced Marmont to retreat, who having only 5,000 or 6,000 men to oppose to the forces of the Prussian General, had retired successively on Champaubert, Fromentières, and Vauchamps. It was from the latter place that Marmont had, on the evening of the 13th, written to Napoleon. On the 14th, expecting the Emperor's arrival, he evacuated Vauchamps, and took up a position a little in the rear, on the Montmirail route.

Napoleon having joined Marmont on the 14th, about nine in the morning, offensive operations were instantly resumed. Marshal Marmont, in abandoning Vauchamps, had taken up a position on a woody height, on whose summit he had placed his artillery. Blucher marching with his accustomed confidence, sent the Prussian Zeithen division forward to Montmirail before him. This division had scarcely got outside Vauchamps, when it was received with a terrible discharge of artillery, that caused great loss, and forced the division to return to the village. Immediately after, Marmont ordered the Ricard division to advance on Vauchamps, in order to carry this village, and under favour of the surrounding woods, try to turn the enemy, on the left, by help of General Grouchy's cavalry, and on the right by Lagrange's infantry division.

Though these movements were executed with extraordinary vigour, they were opposed by great difficulties. The Ricard division having penetrated into Vauchamp, found there the Ziethen division, determined to make a vigorous defence, and was obliged to fall back. The Ricard division returned to the charge, entered Vauchamps a second time, and would have had great difficulty in keeping the place, but for the movements on the two flanks of the village. Grouchy, after having made a *detour* through the woods, poured his troops into Vauchamps on the left, whilst the Lagrange division effected a similar movement on the right, by traversing the wood of Beaumont. Blucher, suspecting from the vigour and simultaneousness of the movements that were being operated around him, that Napoleon himself was present, resolved to fall back. But it was no longer time to do so with impunity. On one hand, Ricard's infantry making a last effort on Vauchamps, drove out the Ziethen division, and on the other hand, Grouchy, debouching abruptly from the woods, threatened to cut off his retreat. This division, formed into squares, tried at first to make head against our cavalry, but vigorously charged by Grouchy's squadrons, the lines were broken, and part of the men laid down their arms. The rest sought refuge with the main body of the Prussian troops. Our horsemen made about 2,000 prisoners, took a dozen pieces of cannon, and several standards. A thousand men, either killed or wounded, were left at Vauchamps and the environs.

But Napoleon hoped to gain still greater advantages over Blucher's troops. He ordered that the Prussian General should be pursued without relaxation, and himself directed the pursuit during half the day. Marmont, at the head of the Ricard and Lagrange infantry, supported besides by the Leval Spanish division, marched forward on the high road that leads from Montmirail to Châlons, through Vauchamps and Champaubert. He had in front the artillery of the Guard, commanded by Drouot, and on his wings, Grouchy's cavalry on one side, and the cavalry of the Guard and of General Saint Germain on the other. It was in this order he pursued Blucher, who was retiring in two compact masses, that of Kleist on the left of the route, that of Capzewitz on the right, with his artillery and baggage on the route itself. The Prussian General had very little cavalry to protect his infantry.

From eleven in the forenoon to three in the afternoon the French kept up the pursuit, pouring bullets and often grape shot on the enemy. In this way they reached Janvilliers, Fromentières, and Champaubert. The pursuers perceived that two of the enemy's battalions, posted in a wood, had remained behind. They were surrounded and obliged to surrender. At the same time, Grouchy seeing that in order to obtain the mastery over all or part of the two masses of enemies that were advancing along both sides of the route, it would be necessary to forestall their arrival at the entrance of the woods that surround Etoges, conceived the design of dashing through the woods as fast as his horses could go, in order to precede Blucher. For this purpose he ordered the light artillery to join him as quickly as possible. Whilst he was executing this movement the artillery cannonaded at every pause Blucher's two columns. This kind of warfare continued to the close of the day, when the Prussians were seen suddenly to stop, and their lines immediately bristled with bayonets. Grouchy had, in fact, got in advance of them with a portion of his squadrons, and attacked them on the left, whilst General Saint Germain did the same on the right with the cavalry lately arrived from Versailles. Blucher, placed in the midst of his infantry, did all in his power to infuse his spirit into his troops, and succeeded in bringing them in pretty good order, as far as the entrance of Etoges, but not without experiencing considerable loss. General Grouchy, though deprived of his artillery, which had not been able to follow him, charged Blucher's infantry several times, and penetrated their ranks sword in hand, whilst General Saint Germain did as much on his side. And here, by the instrumentality of cold steel alone, the French killed some hundred men, and took more than 2,000 prisoners, besides several flags and pieces of artillery. On arriving at the border of the woods that lay between them and Etoges, they were obliged to pause.

The French had already taken, killed or wounded, about 7,000 of Marshal Blucher's men. But Marmont ambitioned still more spoils. He suspected that the Prussian General would pass the

night at Etoges, and that his harassed troops would scatter themselves confusedly through the village, or in the neighbouring forest, and he thought that by appearing suddenly in the midst of them during the night, he would throw them into great disorder, and above all, drive them beyond Etoges to the foot of the plateau, which, during so many days, had been the theatre of war. Destined, in all probability, to again defend this position, whilst Napoleon carried his arms elsewhere, Marmont fixed his mind on taking up a position at Etoges itself, whence he could command the route of Vertus. He therefore resolved to make a night attack on Blucher.

But Marshal Marmont had only a small body of forces at his disposal, for his soldiers were already dispersed in the environs, looking for provisions. Marmont was followed by the Leval division, which Ney asserted was under his command. After a pretty warm discussion between the two Marshals, Marmont took a detachment of this division, and with one of his regiments of marines, dashed into the wood under favour of the darkness, and came suddenly down on Etoges, at the moment when the enemy, worn out by fatigue, began to enjoy a few minutes repose. This unexpected attack was crowned with success. Prussians and Russians, attacked before they could resume the defensive, were thrust out of Etoges, and obliged in the middle of the night, to fly to Bergères and Vertus. The French made a large number of prisoners, amongst whom were the Russian General Orosoff himself, with his staff. The latter part of this day Blucher lost more than 2,000 men, and a large quantity of artillery.

This day—the 14th—named after Vauchamps, cost Blucher from 9,000 to 10,000 men, either killed, wounded, or made prisoners. It would not be possible to put a more glorious termination to this admirable train of operations. Napoleon had set out on the 9th of February from Nogent-sur-Seine, he arrived on the 10th at Champaubert, where, on that day, he took or destroyed Olsouvieff's corps, and on the 11th, conquered at Montmirail, Sacken's troops. On the 12th he beat and drove back on Château-Thierry d'York's troops, employed the 13th in rebuilding the bridge of the Marne, for the purpose of sending Mortier in pursuit of the enemy, and on the 14th returned to Montmirail, and attacked Blucher, who had maladroitly thrown himself in his way, as if to furnish him an opportunity of overwhelming the last of the four detachments of the army of Silesia. Thus, almost, without fighting a regular battle, Napoleon had in four quickly-succeeding combats, entirely disorganized the army of Silesia, captured or killed 28,000 out of 60,000 men, carried off an immense quantity of artillery and flags, and severely punished the most presumptuous, the bravest and the most embittered of his adversaries. Surely Napoleon had now reason to be proud of his army and of himself, and of the last scintillations of his wondrous star, wondrous, even amidst calamity!

Napoleon sent on immediately to Paris the 18,000 prisoners he

had made, in order that the Parisians might see them with their own eyes, and that in beholding these trophies, worthy of the wars of Italy, their faith in the genius and good fortune of their Emperor might again revive.

The Parisians had learned in succession the unhoped-for triumphs of Napoleon, and excepting some, carried away by party spirit or hatred of the Imperial dynasty, had rejoiced at his success. The announcement of columns of prisoners had excited to the highest degree the expectation of the Parisians, who hoped to see them defile on the boulevards, within two or three days. But they scarcely dared indulge a sentiment of joy, for at the same time that they learned the defeat of Blucher and his lieutenants at Champaubert, at Montmirail, at Château-Thierry, and at Vauchamps, they also learned that Schwarzenberg was ready to force the passage of the Seine from Nogent to Montereau, and that Platow's Cossacks had appeared in the forest of Fontainebleau. Unhappy Paris, from whose bosom, during twenty years, fulminating terrors had been launched upon many European capitals; she was now, in her turn, aprey to the most terrible anguish. Victory even was no guarantee against these alarms, for, one enemy was no sooner beaten on the Marne than another appeared on the Seine, and tranquillized as to the state of things at Meaux, she was alarmed by the apprehension of what might occur in the direction of Melun and Fontainebleau. Earnest entreaties had reached Napoleon from Paris, imploring him to return to the Seine. On this account he had abandoned Marmont before the close of the battle-day at Vauchamps, and returned to Montmirail, to give new orders and prepare for new combats.

We shall now relate what had taken place in the great army of Prince Schwarzenberg. When Napoleon had quitted the Aube and the Seine for the Marne, the allied sovereigns had repaired to Troyes, and their army going in advance had occupied the course of the Seine from Nogent to Montereau, and had even endeavoured to extend the line to the Yonne, in order to avert the danger of being outflanked on the left. The declared object of the grand army of Bohemia was to march on Paris along the two banks of the Seine, by Fontainebleau and Melun, whilst the army of Silesia, following the course of the Marne, should arrive at Paris by Meaux. The expectation of entering the capital of France, inflamed, at this moment, the imagination of Alexander. Whilst the Emperor Francis lived in a retired manner at Troyes, receiving little society, and visiting only M. de Metternich, the Emperor Alexander, ever in a state of feverish activity, passed from one detachment of the army to the other, affecting to direct everything, and incessantly advising Blucher to await his arrival before entering Paris. The King of Prussia, to please the patriots of his staff, yielded to all the whims of his ally, but with the awkwardness of a sage, ill-fitted to play this empty and restless part. It is in this state the Allies were found by a trustworthy eye-witness, the brave

and learned General Reynier, who had been exchanged for General Count de Merveldt (both had been taken prisoners at Leipzig), and who, when this change was effected, had passed through Troyes, on his return to Paris. General Reynier was presented to the allied sovereigns, and listened to their observations with extreme attention.* The Emperor Francis conjured him to repeat to his son-in-law the advice he had so often given him—to yield to the pressure of circumstances, and give up what was demanded of him since he could not retain it. He bade him also reflect on the position of Austria at the actual time, in order to learn that submitting to the harsh necessities of the present, was often only a means to secure future advantages. The King of Prussia had, according to his wont, said scarcely anything, but Alexander had spoken with extraordinary vivacity. He had, in the first place, asked General Reynier when he expected to reach Paris, and the General having replied that he hoped to be there on the 14th or 15th of February, Alexander said: "Very well, Blucher will be there before you; Napoleon has humiliated me and I will humiliate him; and, I am so far from making war on France, that were he killed, I would desist immediately." "It is then for the Bourbons that your Majesty makes war," said General Reynier. "The Bourbons," rejoined Alexander, "I care not for them. Choose a leader amongst yourselves, amongst the illustrious generals who have contributed so much to the glory of France, and we are ready to accept him." Alexander, then entering into the most extraordinary and confidential communications, hinted to General Reynier the project of putting Bernadotte on the throne of France, as Catherine, forty years previously, had placed Poniatowski on the throne of Poland. On hearing this disclosure, General Reynier had greatly disconcerted the Czar by expressing the contempt which the military men of France had conceived for the conduct and talents of the new Swedish Prince. Alexander, surprised and displeased, dismissed General Reynier, who immediately set out for Paris, to offer his services to Napoleon, an offer highly meritorious in his circumstances, for he had rejected the most flattering offers of Alexander, to remain faithful to France in her misfortunes. General Reynier was Swiss by birth, but French in heart and act.

Wounded pride and the desire of vengeance dictated at this moment every act of the Emperor Alexander. It was under these influences he had suspended the sittings of Congress, assuming as a reason for not resuming them that M. de Caulaincourt had not immediately accepted the Châtillon propositions. He displayed in this matter a dogged determination, and wished to prevent all further negotiation. M. de Metternich, aided by Lord Castlereagh,

* No sooner had General Reynier arrived at Paris, than he made a faithful report of these conversations, which was immediately sent to Napoleon. This report, one of the most curious of the secret documents of the time, is worthy of entire credit, for General Reynier was incapable of disfiguring the truth, and besides, his report accords with all that the diplomatic despatches, French and foreign, tell us, touching the head-quarters of the allied sovereigns.

combated this wish of the Czar. The Austrian minister persevered in his policy of not carrying too far a struggle, which beyond a certain point, would only tend to give a preponderance to Russia. The English minister, ready to abandon warfare, if Antwerp and Genoa were given up to him, had, in opposing the Emperor Alexander, made use of the letter that M. de Caulaincourt had secretly addressed to M. de Metternich, and in which he asked if, in accepting the proposed bases, he would at least obtain a suspension of arms. Supporting their arguments on this letter, the Austrian and English ministers said that France being ready to yield to the wishes of the Allies, there was no motive for carrying hostilities further; that such a course would be only to incur useless risks for a purpose which could not be the avowed object of any of the allied powers. In fact, the Emperor Francis could not declare to Europe that he was going to make war for the purpose of dethroning his daughter, and the British Cabinet, though public opinion was become greatly modified in England, could not avow to Parliament that the war was being carried on for the purpose of re-establishing the Bourbons. Lord Castlereagh was now in a position to deprive France of Antwerp and Genoa, and should he expose himself to a reverse by outstepping the object of his mission, it would be impossible for him to appear either before the House of Lords or Commons in England. In short, in prolonging hostilities, there was a risk that France, as a nation, might rise against them, for already, in some parts, the peasants were arming, the convoys of the Allies were intercepted, stragglers from their army were killed, and this danger seemed likely to increase, and must necessarily add considerably to the difficulties of this envenomed struggle. As neither Austria's troops nor England's gold could be dispensed with, and as M. de Metternich as well as Lord Castlereagh had displayed remarkable firmness on this occasion, the other Allies had consented to the resumption of conferences. Accordingly, the plenipotentiaries, who were still at Châtillon, received a copy of preliminaries, whose acceptance would put an instant stop to hostilities; but the form was so humiliating, that an acceptance would be considered equivalent to entering Paris. This was a consolation expressly prepared for the Emperor Alexander. He was satisfied, hoping that Napoleon would not accept these new offers, and meanwhile, he urged Prince Schwarzenberg to march on Paris, to spare himself the mortification of arriving there after Marshal Blucher, or being stopped by the signing of peace at the moment he should be about to enter the capital.

As a consequence of these considerations, Prince Schwarzenberg had advanced in a direction parallel to the Seine, from Nogent to Montereau. He ordered the Wittgenstein corps and the troops of Marshal de Wrede to advance on Nogent and Bray; the Wurtembergers were to advance on Montereau, and those of Colloredo and Giulay on the Yonne, these latter having orders to cross the river and advance on Fontainebleau. The Russian and Prussian reserves

were to remain under Barclay and Tolly, between Troyes and Nogent. Wittgenstein and de Wrède having presented themselves at Nogent and Bray, were received at Nogent by General Bourmont, whom Marshal Victor had left there with only 1,200 men. This General, after a heroic combat, repulsed the enemy with a loss of 1,500 men. But at Bray, the Allies found only the National Guard, and forced the passage. Marshal Victor seeing the passage of the Seine forced at Bray, did not dare remain behind at Nogent, and retired on Provins and Nangis. Marshal Oudinot, borne along in this retrograde movement, and having only the Rothenbourg division to bring in aid, had followed the retreat of Marshal Victor, and both had taken up a position on the little river Yères, which crosses the Brie and falls into the Seine, near Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. The two marshals, drawn up behind this narrow river, awaited the coming of Napoleon. The brave General Pajol, always on horseback, spite of his gaping wounds, could not keep his position at Montereau, when Bray and Nogent were abandoned; he had joined General Alix, who had just defended Sens with the greatest vigour, and had fallen back from the Yonne on the Loing canal and from the Loing canal on Fontainebleau.

Thus, on the 14th of February, the day that Napoleon completed at Vauchamps the defeat of the army of Silesia, the troops of the army of Bohemia were posted in this manner: the Prince of Wittgenstein was at Provins, the Marshal de Wrède at Nangis, the Wurtembergers at Montereau, the Prince of Colloredo in the forest of Fontainebleau, General Giulay at Pont-sur-Yonne, the Cossacks in the neighbourhood of Orleans, Maurice de Liechtenstein with the Austrian reserves at Sens, and Barclay de Tolly, with the Russian and Prussian Guards, between Nogent and Bray. Some intelligence of Blucher's defeat had reached the head-quarters of the Allies, but they were not yet aware of the extent of his reverses, and they flattered themselves they could reach Paris by Fontainebleau or Melun.

On learning this melancholy state of things, Napoleon, with his wondrous activity, which knew no limits but the physical strength of his soldiers, immediately left Vauchamps for Montmirail, followed by the Young and Old Guard, and all the cavalry. He left Marshal Marmont the task he had already confided to him, that of holding a position between the Seine and the Marne, from Etoges to Montmirail, to keep a close watch on the *débris* of Blucher's army, and to aid Mortier, who had been sent in pursuit of Sacken and d'York in the direction of Soissons. Then Napoleon made arrangements to advance to the Seine and encounter Prince Schwarzenberg.

A grave question now presented itself to the mind of Napoleon. Would it be well to go straight from Montmirail to Nogent by Sézanne (the route he had taken before), reach the Seine by the shortest way, and so fall unexpectedly on Prince Schwarzenberg's flank; or, whether, would it be better, to follow the retrograde

movement of the Marshals Victor and Oudinot, whom it was supposed had been forced to retire still further since the last intelligence; would it be better to fall back to the banks of the Yères, join the two marshals, and, combined with them, attack Prince Schwarzenberg in front, and drive him back on the Seine that he had crossed? Were it always possible during war, to have timely information of the designs of the enemy, Napoleon might have known that the different corps of the army of Bohemia, were dispersed between Provins, Nangis, Montereau, Fontainebleau, and Sens, and then throwing himself into the midst of them with 25,000 men by the road that leads from Sézanne to Nogent, which was the shortest, he would have taken in flank the scattered corps of the enemy, joined with his right, Victor and Oudinot, thrown back in succession, Wittgenstein and de Wrède on the Prince of Wurtemberg, and all three on Colloredo, and destroyed or made prisoners a portion of those that had crossed the Seine.* But Napoleon having employed five days in fighting the army of Silesia, was ignorant of what had occurred in that of Bohemia, and in this ignorance of the actual state of things, was obliged to shape his conduct according to probabilities. Now, the great probability was that the marshals, after having fallen back a considerable distance, would have fallen back still further, that they would have paused behind the little river of Yères, that Schwarzenberg would be close upon them, attacking them with at least 80,000 men, having perhaps already conquered them, and in this case, by advancing directly on Nogent or Provins with only 25,000 men, Napoleon would incur the risk of meeting Schwarzenberg returning with 80,000 which would be a serious matter, before he should be joined by the two marshals. Besides, all the cross-roads from Montmirail to Nogent and from Montmirail to Provins were detestable, and might be impassable for his troops. For this reason, which was sufficiently strong, and from prudential motives, the safest course, instead of advancing direct to the Seine, was to fall back on Yères, as the marshals themselves had done, and join them by the paved route from Mont-

* I must here reply to the ill-founded reproach, that General Koch, in his excellent and conscientious work on the campaign of 1814, addresses to Napoleon, for not having marched directly from Montmirail to Provins, instead of falling back on Meaux. General Koch, always clear-sighted and impartial, is the only writer of the, period that deserves entire confidence; however, even he is sometimes mistaken especially as he had not access to the Emperor's correspondence, for which reason he could not know or appreciate the motives that dictated the acts he criticises. It is, as we have already frequently repeated, with extreme reserve that any one should pronounce on Napoleon's conduct, and we may safely say, that when he errs, which seldom happens in his military combinations, he has been excited by his political feelings, or has been left in a forced ignorance of the enemy's movements. But in any other case, we may affirm with confidence, that his movements are calculated with incomparable depth and foresight. It is necessary then, before giving an opinion, that we should read all that remains of his written intentions, and be convinced that when we cannot discover his motives in the two causes we have just named, that they can be found in the facts themselves, if studied with greater attention. In short, it rarely happens, that in re-perusing these facts we do not find fresh cause to admire his genius, even whilst we deplore the unlicensed ambition that led to his ruin.

mirail to Meaux, from Meaux to Fontenay and Guignes, and this combination would raise his army to 60,000 men, which would be sufficient to drive back Prince Schwarzenberg on the Seine. Instead of taking the Austrian General in flank, Napoleon would attack him in front, but it might be that instead of finding his army in one solid mass, the French would find them dispersed in different corps, and it would not then be impossible to treat them as they had treated Blucher.

This was the only plan concordant with good sense, and Napoleon, who in his military projects always combined prudence with boldness, did not hesitate to adopt it. He, the same evening, ordered his Guard, both young and old, infantry and cavalry, the Leval Spanish division, and the cavalry of General Saint-Germain, to make the next day—the 15th—a forced march as far as Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and he set out himself for Meaux, in order to superintend the movements of his troops.

Having arrived on the afternoon of the 15th, at Meaux, he there resolved upon his final arrangements. It was on Meaux that General Macdonald had fallen back after the retreat that had so much afflicted him, and it was at Meaux that he had tried to reorganize his *corps d'armée*. This corps, with the *débris* he had brought back, with some battalions, drawn from the depôts in Paris, and with all the National Guards that could be collected, were distributed into three divisions, amounting in all to about 12,000 men. Napoleon despatched them immediately by the route that leads from Meaux to Fontenay, to the Yères, this little stream of water, behind which all our forces were concentred. He ordered Marshals Victor and Oudinot, who had retired to this spot, to keep their position, and informed them that he would join them next day—the 16th. The noble cavalry brought from Spain had already marched beyond Paris, to the number of 4,000. They were the finest troops in the world. Napoleon posted them at Guignes, where he supposed the principal battle of the campaign would take place. The two divisions of the Young Guard, organized at Paris, had just left, under General Charpentier and Boyer, to advance along the left bank of the Seine, and occupy the Fontainebleau route. Napoleon might certainly have brought them up on the right bank of the Seine, and combined all his resources in the neighbourhood of Guignes, but it would be risking too much to leave Paris unprotected along the left bank, as the Allies had sent a considerable number of their forces in that direction. He had consequently sent these two divisions forward on the Essonne, recommending them to fight to the last extremity, and so endeavour to protect Paris on the left bank of the Seine, whilst he would endeavour to free the capital on the right bank by a decisive battle. Lastly he gave directions necessary to make him sole master of the passages of the rivers, along which he was manœuvring; he gave orders for preparing provisions along the routes, and also to collect the field-labourers' carts, in order that the soldiers of the

Guard, transported on these carts, might be able to make double or treble stages. The next day he set out from Meaux, and arrived by Fontenay at Guignes, at the very moment when the Marshals Victor and Oudinot, flung back on the Yères, were disputing possession of the banks of that river with the van of Prince de Wittgenstein and the Marshal de Wrède. This state of things justified the resolution Napoleon had taken, for once united to the two Marshals, he need no longer fear Wittgenstein and de Wrède, as he should find himself at the head of 60,000 men, wherewith to oppose 50,000, and the result would undoubtedly be a signal success.

Napoleon considering that though a great mass of the enemy's forces lay before him, still Schwarzenberg's entire army could not be there, for he received intelligence of the enemy's presence at the same time, at Montereau, at Fontainebleau, and Sens, and even in the environs of Orleans. He consequently concluded that more than half the grand army of Bohemia did not lie before him, and he resolved to immediately assume the offensive. Though his guard and the Leval division had not arrived, he had under his command, including the troops of the three Marshals, Oudinot, Victor, Macdonald, and the Spanish cavalry, about 35,000 or 36,000 men and these he thought sufficient, when he was present, to attack 50,000. Besides the 25,000 men, who were coming up, would join in a few hours, and he made arrangements to commence fighting at the break of day.

Effectively on the 17th, he was on horseback from early morning directing in person the movements of his troops. Marshal Victor's troops having formed the rear guard in the retreat from the Seine to the Yères, now naturally constituted the van-guard. This Marshal advanced, having in the centre the Dufour and Hamelinaye divisions of reserve, and these troops he did not hesitate to expose, because they belonged to General Gérard; the wings were formed of the Duhesme and Chataux divisions of the 2nd corps, Marshal Victor's own troops, which he spared as much as possible. On the right the cavalry of the 5th corps, under General Milhaud; on the left, the cavalry of Spain, under General Treilhard, marched deployed, ready to charge *a outrance*. Marshal Victor was followed by the Marshals Oudinot and Macdonald. In the rear, but at a distance of several leagues, the Guard, travelling on carts, covered the route from Meaux to Guignes.

Hardly had Marshal Victor set out from Guignes for Mormant, than he perceived Count Pahlen with 2,500 foot, and about 1,800 horse soldiers; these formed the vanguard of the Prince de Wittgenstein. Here was noble prey that presented itself at the commencement of the operations against the army of Bohemia. General Gérard, who showed himself superior to others, and even seemed to outdo all his former deeds during this severe campaign, advanced at the head of a battalion of the 32nd; young soldiers, draughted into an old skeleton regiment, renowned in the Italian campaigns. He entered Mormant sword in hand, and drove out

Count Pahlen's infantry, who had taken refuge there in the hope of being assisted by the Bavarians, who were posted at Nangis. Deprived of this shelter, the Russian infantry was obliged to cross the open space that separates Mormant from Nangis. Drouot, debouching from Mormant with his artillery, covered the Russians with grape-shot, whilst that on the left, the Count de Valmy, with the squadrons lately arrived from Spain, and on the right, Count Milhaud with the dragoons that came the preceding year, attacked the enemy with drawn swords. The squares of Russian infantry, spite their solidity, were broken and all captured with their artillery. Their cavalry was overtaken before they could save themselves by flight, and a great part made prisoners or destroyed. This affair cost the Russians 4,000 men, reckoning prisoners with the killed and wounded, and eleven pieces of cannon.

This commencement promised Prince Schwarzenberg's army treatment pretty similar to what Blucher's army had experienced. However, it was necessary that the French should keep up an incessant pursuit, if they wished to obtain the result they had a right to hope, and Napoleon consequently accelerated the forward movement of the different corps. The French advanced rapidly on Nangis, throwing back at the same time the Russian troops of Wittgenstein, whose van-guard they had already annihilated, and the Bavarian troops, that retired to their *corps de bataille*. The success of this new series of operations depended essentially on the immediate passage of the Seine, for if Napoleon succeeded in crossing that river, before all the enemy's corps had repassed, and especially those that had ventured as far as Fontainebleau, he was almost sure of encountering in detail those that should be latest in returning. He therefore advanced rapidly towards the bridges of Nogent, Bray, and Montereau that lay before him. He sent Marshal Oudinot forward through Provins to Nogent, with part of the cavalry of Spain, under Count de Valmy; and sent Marshal Macdonald to Bray, by the way of Donnemarie. As to himself, he turned to the right, followed by Marshal Victor's troops, and advanced on Montereau, passing through Villeneuve. Not knowing which of these three bridges would be easiest to retake, Napoleon determined to attack the three at the same time. By marching boldly forward the French might carry one or two of the three bridges, and then it would be possible to cross the Seine in time to cut off the retreat of those corps of the enemy that had advanced too far.

In advancing on Villeneuve, Marshal Victor, still preceded by the Dufour and the Hamelinaye divisions, headed by General Gérard, met a little beyond Valjouan, the Bavarian division, Lamotte, that was seeking to escape, and that had very little cavalry to oppose to ours. The Lamotte division occupied the high road transversely; the left wing was strongly supported by the village of Villeneuve, the right deployed in a little plain, surrounded by trees. Gen. Gérard, who was actively engaged in every encounter with the enemy, advanced on Villeneuve with a battalion of the 86th, carried

the place at the point of the bayonet, and thus deprived the Lamotte division of the support of this village. The division was then obliged to retire across the little plain that lay behind, and seek refuge in the woods. This was a favourable moment for our cavalry to charge. General Lheritier, who commanded a portion of Milhaud's dragoons, was on the spot, and if he had profitted of the opportunity, the fate of the Lamotte division was decided. Our soldiers, always intelligent, called loudly on the cavalry, but whether General Lheritier awaited orders from Marshal Victor, that did not arrive, or whether it was that he did not perceive the favourable opportunity, certain it is he remained motionless, and the Bavarian infantry crossed the open plain unmolested. Happily, General Gérard, guided by a peasant, had skirted the border of the wood, and now suddenly debouched with his infantry on the flank of the Lamotte division that was retiring in squares. He attacked these squares at the point of the bayonet, broke several, and now received most timely help from General Bordessoule, who, observing the immobility of the rest of the cavalry, rushed upon the enemy with three hundred young cuirassiers, just arrived from the depôt at Versailles. These brave beginners, with an ardour and ferocity not unfrequently displayed by young soldiers, charged the Bavarian broken lines with impetuosity, and sabred a great number of the enemy. This division lost on this occasion 1,000 men, but the French might have taken or destroyed the entire. Our troops now advanced to Salins, where Marshal Victor stopped to pass the night, though he had orders to march to Montereau. He wished General Gérard to go there; but the latter, whose troops were harassed by a long march and two engagements, were unequal to the task, and it was the duty of Marshal Victor, whose two divisions had not fought during the day, to form the head of the column by night. The Marshal did nothing of the kind; he was fatigued, ill, dejected, discontented with Napoleon, who had reproached him with having badly defended the Seine; in a word, he was suffering, morally and physically, though still ready to re-appear on the battle-field, and prove himself an officer as intelligent as brave. He passed the night at Salins, at a league from the bridge of Montereau, where great advantages awaited us, had our activity corresponded to the urgency of circumstances.

Napoleon, overwhelmed with fatigue, had taken a moment's repose at Nangis, intending to rise in the middle of the night, according to his custom, to issue orders, which it was necessary to give at night, that they might reach their destination by break of day. He rose at one, and learned that Marshal Victor had remained at Salins. His irritation was extreme, for all the reports received the evening before, announced that the enemy in retiring, had taken precautions to dispute with us the possession of the bridges of Nogent and Bray, which was but too easy to accomplish. In fact, the high grounds, which at Montereau border and command the Seine, are at Bray and Nogent far in the background, and conse-

quently afford no prominent position from which the bridges could be fired on. On the contrary, villages extending along both banks and well barricaded, offered posts, which the army of Bohemia, concentrated on account of its retreat, could long dispute with us. There now only remained the bridge of Montereau, and this bridge was so much the more important, as, if the French crossed it, it would be possible to cut off Colloredo's corps, that had ventured as far as Fontainebleau, and so deprive the enemy at one blow of about 15,000 or 20,000 men, which would be a signal triumph. Napoleon ordered Marshal Victor to quit his bed instantly, summon the troops from their bivouac, and march to Montereau. He also prepared to go there himself. Before setting out he ordered Marshals Oudinot and Macdonald to carry, if possible, the one Nogent, the other Bray, but if they failed, to fall back on him, that all may debouch on Montereau. The Guard having made a day's journey on carts, had arrived at Nangis; Napoleon ordered them to follow Victor to Montereau.

A resolution was taken on this day, which attested the importance of our recent success. When Napoleon arrived that evening at Nangis, he met the Count de Paar, an aide-de-camp of Prince Schwarzenberg, who had come *a l'improviste,* to demand a suspension of arms, a suspension that M. de Caulaincourt had vainly offered, a few days before, to purchase, by the most bitter sacrifices. How came it that so much self-confidence, haughtiness, and severity on the part of the Allies, had suddenly given way to so much prudence and moderation? The sovereigns assembled at Nogent around the Prince de Schwarzenberg, after having first heard vague reports of Blucher, had soon learned in detail the extent of the reverses experienced by this fiery-spirited General, and conscious of Napoleon's presence by the severe attacks they had just experienced themselves, they suddenly conceived opinions more modest than those they had entertained up to the preceding evening. The army of Bohemia was, in fact, in a very serious position, for this army was advancing abreast in a battle-line of more than twenty leagues in extent, from Nogent to Fontainebleau, and in four columns, of which one or two ran imminent risk of being surrounded and destroyed, should Napoleon get in advance of them at the passage of the Seine. To put an instant stop to his further progress was of the highest importance, and spite of the customary remarks of the party that advocated war *a outrance,* Prince Schwarzenberg, despising them on this occasion, took the resolution of immediately sending an aide-de-camp to Napoleon, proposing that both parties should pause where they were, saying that certainly it was owing to his ignorance of what was going on at Châtillon, that the Emperor had carried hostilities so far, that the conferences, temporarily suspended, had been resumed, on bases admitted by M. de Caulaincourt himself, and that within a few hours, they should probably learn that the preliminaries of peace were signed. Such an assertion must be regarded either as a fraud or an evidence of extraordinary simpli-

city. M. de Caulaincourt had not accepted the insulting propositions made by the Allies; he had limited himself to demanding confidentially of M. de Metternich, whether the summary acceptance of their propositions would be at least productive of a suspension of arms, and this enquiry he had made in a moment of despair on the morrow of the battle of la Rothière. But to suppose that after the battles of Champaubert, Montmirail, Château-Thierry, Vauchamps, Mormant, and Villeneuve, to suppose, we say, that after such combats, Napoleon would consent that France should be circumscribed within her ancient limits, and what was still worse, renounce the privilege of having an opinion on the fate that was prepared for Italy, Germany, Holland, and Poland, this was truly a strange presumption, and equal at least to that of which we have more than once accused Napoleon.

Be this as it may, it was the substance of what the aide-de-camp of the Prince de Schwarzenberg was commissioned to propose at the French head-quarters. So Napoleon was expected to pause in the midst of victory, and consent to his own and France's degradation.

He listened with an ironical smile to the intelligence that a messenger had arrived from the Allies; he would not admit him to his presence, but he consented to receive Prince Schwarzenberg's letter, saying that he would reply at a later period. In fact, he did not know what was the nature of the propositions to which the message he received referred. Having but rarely held communications with M. de Caulaincourt, from whom he was separated by the entire army of Bohemia, Napoleon was quite ignorant of what had taken place at Châtillon; he did not know that after the most abhorrent propositions had been made to M. de Caulaincourt, that the latter had written confidentially to M. de Metternich: he did not know that the Austrian minister had regarded the letter of M. de Caulaincourt as an official document, and as such, had transmitted it to the Allies, and that in order to induce Napoleon to pause in his successful career, it was not only required that France should shrink back within the limits of 1790, but she was also required to renounce her position as an European Power. Napoleon was ignorant of all these details, or he would have given the Austrian envoy a very different reception. In the proposal the Allies made to him, he only saw a desire of arresting his victorious progress, without suspecting the nature of the conditions of peace, to which allusion was made. And it certainly was not probable that he would consent to sheathe his sword at the moment when by a last successful effort, he might hope to change the entire aspect of affairs. He therefore deferred his reply, and continued his march. But fearing that M. de Caulaincourt, whose mind was a prey to the most horrible torments, and whose society at Châtillon was composed of enemies who would hide from him our success, fearing that under such circumstances he might yield under the difficulties by which he was beset, and make too extensive a use of

the powers entrusted to him, Napoleon, before mounting his horse to set out for Montereau, wrote him the following letter:

"Nangis, 18th February.

"I gave you a *carte blanche*, in order to save Paris, and avoid a battle, which was the last hope of the nation. The battle has been fought; Providence has blessed our arms. I have taken between 30,000 and 40,000 prisoners; I have captured 200 pieces of cannon, a great number of Generals, and destroyed several armies, almost without striking a blow. I yesterday came up with Prince Schwarzenberg's army, which I hope to destroy before it repasses our frontiers. You ought to assume the same attitude; you ought to do everything to obtain peace; but my desire is that you should not sign anything without my orders, because I alone understand my position. As a general principle, I only desire a solid and honourable peace, and it can only be such on the bases proposed at Frankfort. If the Allies had accepted your propositions of the 9th, there would have been no battle; I would not have incurred any risk at a moment when the least reverse might have brought ruin on France, but on the other hand, I should not have learned the secret of my adversary's weakness. It is but fair that I should enjoy the advantages of fortune that are offered to me. I desire peace, but it shall not be one that will impose on France conditions more humiliating than those of Frankfort. My position is now certainly much better than when the Allies were at Frankfort; they might then defy me, I had obtained no advantage over them, and they were far from my territory. But now things are very different. I have gained immense advantages over them, advantages that find no parallel in my military career of twenty years, a career, too, not wholly devoid of glory. I am ready to put an end to hostilities, and allow the enemies to return quietly to their own homes, if they sign preliminaries based on the Frankfort propositions."

If the Allies conjured up illusions for themselves, Napoleon, it was plain, did the same for himself, and instead of contenting himself with rejecting what was unpleasant, he demanded what, under the circumstances, he could not obtain.

Whilst Napoleon employed the first hours of the morning of the 18th in this manner, Marshal Victor had at length marched on Montereau, and arrived there at a very early hour. General Pajol, after having rallied his troops in the wood of Valence, had advanced with his cavalry and some battalions of the National Guards. He reached the borders of the wood of Valence, at the very moment that Marshal Victor debouched opposite the little hillock of Surville, which commands the Seine and the little town of Montereau. This hillock, which descends in a tolerably gentle slope on the Valence and Salins sides, breaks on the Seine side in an abrupt declivity. From the top of this eminence, we perceive the little town of Montereau lying at the foot, and the two rivers that mingle their waters at this spot as well as the bridge of the Seine, are objects of great importance, for which the two armies were about to

contend desperately. If the French succeeded in quickly getting possession of the hillock, it was possible, by dashing up to the bridge, which was of stone, and less liable to be destroyed than one of wood, to get possession of that too, before the enemy could cut it down. But to attack the hillock was not a slight undertaking, the Würtembergers being stationed there in great force. It was the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg that occupied the position. This Prince, whom Napoleon had formerly treated very ill, and whom the Emperor Alexander, on the contrary, loaded with favours, intending even to give him in marriage, his sister, the Archduchess Catherine; this intellectual and brave Prince sought to distinguish himself, and efface by his services to the Allies, his father's long devotedness to the French Empire. On the possession of the bridge of Montereau depended the safety of the Austrian corps of Colloredo, that had ventured as far as Fontainebleau, and whose retreat was impossible, should the French cross the Seine, before this corps had fallen back at least as far as Moret or Nemours. But, notwithstanding the danger of the position, the Prince of Wurtemberg was resolved to resist, at the risk of being driven from the hillock of Surville into the Seine.

The Prince de Wurtemberg had ranged his infantry from Villaron to Saint-Martin, facing the route by which the French were advancing. His rear was covered by the hillock of Surville. He was, besides, protected by a large quantity of artillery.

General Pajol, ever brave and intelligent, had endeavoured to advance with his cavalry on the rear of the Wurtemberger's position, in order to take possession of the high road that runs behind the hillock of Surville, and make a rapid descent on the town of Montereau. But stopped by a destructive fire from the artillery, he was obliged to wait the execution of his project until Marshal Victor's infantry should have made their attack on the hillock.

One of the Marshal's divisions, commanded by his son-in-law, General Chataux, a distinguished officer, arrived first, and exhibited great impatience to repair the fault that Napoleon had just blamed so severely. This division advanced with impetuosity on the hillock of Surville, with their right towards Villaron, their left towards Saint-Martin. The soldiers, led on with spirit, tried to escalade the position which was protected by *clotures*. They succeeded at first, were afterwards repulsed, and made repeated attempts without attaining their object, notwithstanding prodigious efforts of courage.

General Chataux did not spare himself, but his very impetuosity involved a danger, that of exhausting this brave division before it could be supported, and thus uselessly shedding most precious blood. Soon the Duhesme division arrived, with the Marshal himself, and this division replaced that of Chataux, which advanced more to the right to attack the hillock on the least precipitous side. The brave General Chataux marching at the head of his soldiers, was struck by a ball before his father-in-law's eyes, and fell dying into his arms. This fatal accident damped the ardour of the attack on the right,

and the Duhesme division on the left, attacking the position on the least accessible side, was not likely to succeed, when General Gérard arrived with the Dufour and Hamelinaye divisions.

Napoleon, informed of the difficulties of the attack, and displeased with Marshal Victor, had sent General Gérard orders to take the chief command, which General Gérard did immediately. Seeing that the artillery of the Wurtembergers caused us serious annoyance, the General combined all his batteries, as well as those of the 2nd corps, and directed 60 pieces of cannon against the Wurtembergers in order to break their ranks by this violent fire, before attacking them hand to hand. He caused them so much damage, that wishing to free themselves from this murderous fire, they attempted to fall on our cannon and carry them off. General Gérard allowed them to advance, then rushed on them at the head of a battalion, and forced them back on their position at the point of the bayonet. At this moment Napoleon arrived with the Old Guard, and Pajol, after having driven back the enemy's cavalry, threatened to turn the hillock of Surville. At this aspect, the firmness of the Wurtembergers was shaken, and they thought of retreating across the bridge of Montereau. But time was not allowed them for this movement, the French attacked them *en masse*, ascended the hillock and dislodged them by main force; Pajol setting off in full gallop at the head of a regiment of chasseurs, dashed into the high road which runs behind the hillock of Surville, forming at this point a rapid descent, and attacked the Wurtembergers, who were accumulated on the declivity, whilst the artillery of the Guard, with their cannon directed against the hillock itself, riddled them with balls. On their side the brave inhabitants of Montereau, who only awaited the moment to rush upon the enemy, began to fire on them from the windows. The scene was soon one of complete butchery. The Prince of Wurtemberg narrowly escaped being taken, and in escaping left behind 3,000 of his men either killed or wounded, and 4,000 prisoners, with the greater part of his cannon. The most important object, the bridge, remained in possession of Pajol's chasseurs, who crossed it in full gallop, whilst a mine exploded beneath, without carrying away the key-stone. Napoleon, stationed on the hillock of Surville, whence he directed himself the operations of his artillery, experienced at this sight, an exceeding great joy, which he made no effort to conceal. In fact, he expected the most brilliant result from this glorious feat of arms.

Once master of Montereau, Napoleon's first care was to send his cavalry beyond, in order to learn the position of the Austrian corps, commanded by Colloredo. But this corps had already had time to return to the Yonne, and at this moment formed the rear-guard of Prince Schwarzenberg. It was, therefore, no longer possible to overtake them with troops already fatigued, of whom some, as the 2nd corps of the Paris reserve, had fought all day, and others, as the Imperial Guard, had marched incessantly during seventy-two hours, making double stages during the

day, and passing the night on carts. It was necessary then to pause, and take time to let the army pass by the lately conquered bridge of Montereau, and afterwards advance *en masse* on Prince Schwarzenberg, to surprise and destroy his various detachments if they found them dispersed, and give battle if they found them concentrated, a battle which the French would fight with the prestige of victory in their favour, and the consciousness that Napoleon had then actually under his command 60,000 men.

Though the bridge of Montereau had been carried twelve hours too late, Napoleon still had reason to be content with the last eight days. In fact, it was but a week since and he was falling back from Brienne to Troyes, not knowing whether he would be able to defend Paris, and yet within this short space of time, he had cut Blucher's army in pieces, and put to flight that of Schwarzenberg. Here was a change of position, sufficient to satisfy the pride even of the conqueror of Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland. Napoleon could now, if he did not exaggerate the political bearings of his success, terminate this war, in obtaining, if not all the Frankfort conditions, at least some of the most essential, and above all, with stipulations bearing no resemblance to the insulting propositions of Châtillon. However, Napoleon was not satisfied because he had not collected all the fruit he had a right to expect from his admirable tactics, and he quarrelled with several of his lieutenants, who had not, on this occasion, done all he expected from them. Right or wrong, he complained of Digeon, General of Artillery, who had badly supplied the artillery on the eve and even the day of the combat of Montereau; he complained of General Lhéritier, who had not charged the Bavarians at the battle of Villeneuve; of General Montbrun, who had not sufficiently defended the bridge of Moret on the Loing, (this was not the celebrated Montbrun, who died, as we must remember, at the Moskowa); of Marshal Victor, whom he accused of having made an ill-conducted retreat from Strasbourg to Châlons, of having feebly defended the Seine, of having held back the troops at the battle of Villeneuve, of having slept at Salins, instead of marching on to Montereau—in short, of exhibiting on all occasions, a dejection mingled with ill-humour, which gave bad example. Many replies might have been made to the reproaches addressed to these different officers. As to Marshal Victor, though he did not merit the anger of which he was the object, still it must be acknowledged, that he exhibited too much dejection, and seemed to recover his spirits only in presence of the enemy, or under the immediate orders of Napoleon. It must also be admitted that his family were amongst those who exhibited the least zeal for the Empress. Napoleon knew it, and it was under feelings arising from these different circumstances, that he had deprived the Marshal of his command to confer it on General Gérard. This blow, joined to the death of General Chataux, had plunged the unhappy Victor into the profoundest grief. He had remained all day in the thickest of the fight, even when he had no

right to issue orders, repressing the tears, which welled up, through grief at the death of his son-in-law, and vexation at the censure passed on him. He repaired the same evening to the castle of Surville, where he found Napoleon, his mind divided between joy, at the glorious triumph he had obtained, and vexation at the drawbacks with which it was accompanied. Napoleon, on seeing Marshal Victor, could not restrain his anger, and totally forgetting the day of Rothière, reproached him with his conduct during the past two months, and to those reproaches on military topics, he added those of a political character, and finished by telling the Marshal that if he were fatigued or ill, it would be better to seek repose and leave the army. The Marshal, to whom the order to withdraw at this crisis appeared a disgrace, replied that he was about to shoulder a musket and take his place in the ranks of the Old Guard, where he should find a soldier's death beside his old companions in arms. Napoleon, deeply moved by the Marshal's emotion, extended his hand, and consented to keep him near his person. He could not deprive General Gérard of the command of the 2nd corps, which he had that morning conferred on him, and which that General deserved so well, but he indemnified the Marshal in another manner. Two divisions of the Young Guard—Charpentier and Boyer, had just left Paris; these had been posted along the Essonne, to cover the capital on the left of the Seine. Napoleon formed of these a corps of the Guard, and gave the command to Marshal Victor. To place this Marshal about the Emperor's person, and thus relieve him of all responsibility, was a measure that at the same time soothed his feelings, and restored his military importance, for, freed from the anxieties of a higher command, he again became one of the most efficient officers in the army.

On the next day—the 19th—Napoleon wished to march immediately on Nogent, continue his pursuit of Prince Schwarzenberg, and fight a pitched battle, if he could force him to accept it, but the necessity of making all the troops then under his command, pass over the single bridge of Montereau, involved the loss of the entire day. These troops consisted of the two Paris divisions of reserve, the 2nd corps, the Imperial Guard, the Spanish division, and lastly, Marshal Macdonald's corps, which had not been able to cross the Seine at Bray. Whilst these troops employed the time in defiling by the bridge of Montereau, Napoleon was taking measures to overtake the enemy as soon as he could, and if possible, to execute a flank movement for this purpose. The bridges of Bray and Nogent having been destroyed, he ordered preparations to be made for the passage of Marshal Oudinot's corps, near Nogent. As to that of Marshal Macdonald, we have seen that he had brought his corps up to Montereau. Napoleon's project was, after having cleared Montereau, to turn to the left, and follow the course of the Seine as far as Méry, which is not far from the confluence of the Seine and Aube. Having arrived at this point, he intended, instead of following Prince Schwarzenberg along

the Troyes route, to leave a single corps to observe his movements, and with the main body of his own forces, to cross the Seine, at Méry, and advance along the right bank, whilst Prince Schwarzenberg advanced along the left; and now, having no longer an enemy in front, Napoleon's troops could march quicker and eventually repass the Seine, above Troyes, and give Prince Schwarzenberg battle in a position, which was not alone his line of retreat, but his line of communication with Blucher. These were two considerable advantages and of the greatest consequence. Here was an instance of the inexhaustible inventiveness of Napoleon's genius. No sooner was one plan frustrated, than he devised another, equally practicable and beneficial in result.

Napoleon advanced with the main body of his forces to the left towards Nogent; however, not to break off all communication with the Yonne, and not to overcrowd the high road of Troyes, he ordered Marshal Macdonald to advance a little to the right, through Saint-Martin-Bosnay and Pavillon, whilst General Gérard was to advance a little still more to the right, through Trainel and Avon. He ordered General Alix, the brave defender of Sens, to re-occupy the banks of the Yonne, with the National Guards and General Pajol's cavalry. The wounds of this latter General, in consequence of unheard-of fatigues, had again opened. Napoleon, after loading him with rewards, had sent him to Paris, and gave his post to General Alix. He made some additions to the Old Guard; he added two noble battalions, composed of the Old Gendarmes of Spain, which raised to eighteen battalions, the division of the Old Guard that he had with him (the other was in the direction of Soissons, with Marshal Mortier), and he added besides, several companies of young soldiers, whose duty would be to issue from the ranks and act as sharp-shooters, whilst the old veterans remained in line, immoveable as walls. Napoleon reiterated his orders that at Paris, fresh battalions of infantry, and at Versailles, fresh squadrons of cavalry should be incessantly formed. He also ordered portable bridges to be constructed, with boats collected on the Seine, for on account of the want of this appurtenance of war, the passage of French rivers had become as difficult for us as the passage of foreign ones, and was a continual obstacle to the success of our military combinations.

Napoleon employed in making these arrangements, the 19th and 20th of February, which his troops passed in crossing the Seine at Montereau, and advancing towards Nogent. He had momentarily taken up his residence* at the château of Surville, and had great

* We have already made the observation that from want of acquaintance with Napoleon's correspondence, persons often reproach him with faults that he has not committed, or with intentions that he never entertained. The two days passed at Surville furnish a fresh example of this. Various critics, French as well as foreign, after having asked why, on quitting Blucher, Napoleon did not march direct from Montmirail to Provins, and fall upon Prince Schwarzenberg's flank, instead of making a detour in the rear, through Meaux and Guignes, now ask why he did not cross the Seine at Nogent or Bray, instead of crossing at Montereau alone; and why,

need of the time thus afforded him, for it was not alone the troops immediately under his command that engaged his attention, he had during these two days to arrange for all those that defended the various frontiers of France, and who needed his surveillance no less than the others, and who wanted above all the momentum that his spirit alone could impress. General Maison, who had been sent into Belgium to replace General Decaen, with whom Napoleon found fault for having abandoned Willemstadt and Breda, had endeavoured to make head against the various perils with which he was surrounded. Profitting of the moment, when he had at his disposal the Roguet and Barrois divisions of the Young Guard, he made a descent on the English under General Graham, and on the Prussians under General Bulow, and had obliged them to evacuate Antwerp; but being soon after deprived of the Roguet division, having only that of Barrois at his command, with some battalions hastily organized in the depôts of the ancient 1st corps, the whole not amounting to more than 7 or 8,000 men fit for active service, he had been reduced to the alternative, either of shutting himself in Antwerp, or of leaving this place to try and protect Belgium. He chose the latter part, which was the wisest, and left in Antwerp 12,000 men with the illustrious Carnot, whose services Napoleon had accepted, when they were so nobly offered at this trying moment. General Maison then advanced to Brussels, afterwards to Mons and Lille, throwing here and there into the fortresses of the North, what provisions he could collect, with half-clothed, half-armed conscripts, that he managed to get from the depôts. Whilst Carnot supported with invincible firmness a fierce bombardment, which, however, did not damage the fleet—the great object of England's anger—General Maison manœuvring with a handful of soldiers between the three fortresses in the north of France, had, as

after having selected Montereau, he lost two entire days at the castle of Surville? A perusal of Napoleon's letters will furnish a reply to all these questions. At Nogent and Bray, the nature of the locality, flat and bestudded with villages on both banks, offered the enemy such chances of resistance, that there was no hope of forcing the passage, and besides, the bridges being of wood, it was scarcely possible to preserve them from destruction. At Montereau, on the contrary, it was possible, thanks to the hillock of Surville that commanded the opposite bank, to seize the passage more easily; moreover, the bridge being of stone, there would be more time to save it. The event proves that Napoleon was right. Lastly, the hope of seizing the corps that had advanced as far as Fontainebleau was a last great motive for preferring the passage at Montereau. And Napoleon did try to pass the three bridges at the same time, hoping most from Montereau, which was the only point where he succeeded. It is then evident that he did all he could do. As to the time lost on the 19th and 20th of February, his correspondence proves that he was burning with impatience during the hours employed in traversing the bridge and little town of Montereau. This defile being passed, the entire day of the 20th was needed to concentrate the troops on Nogent to the left. Consequently, not a moment was lost, and Napoleon, who traversed on horseback in three hours, the distance that his army could only accomplish in twenty-four, might very well stop at Surville, and devote the 20th to his general affairs, which did not less urgently demand his attention, than those immediately before his eyes. It is quite clear that now as ever, he is right and his critics wrong, when the question touches military operations exclusively. But to be thoroughly convinced of this truth, it would be necessary to read his orders and correspondence, to which historians have not hitherto had access.

far as circumstances would permit, saved our frontier and kept up an active force ready to fall on any detachments of the enemy that came within their reach.

Napoleon, who, in his perilous position, was exceedingly difficult to please, incessantly urged General Maison not to occupy himself exclusively with the fortresses, but to attack in the rear the troops that had marched through Cologne on Champagne, and tormented with unmerited reproaches this General, who had no need of stimulation, for he had shown himself skilful, vigorous, and indefatigable in the defence of this frontier.

Napoleon was more just when he reproached Augereau, but in this instance too, from the habit of demanding more, in order to obtain less, he was too exacting. Augereau, old, wearied, even disgusted, had however recovered his ardour at sight of the danger that threatened France, and which was peculiarly manacing to men, whom, like him, the revolution had compromised. It is true he had at Lyon, three thousand conscripts, draughted into old regiments, but there were no magazines, no victuals, no artillery, no horses. Unfortunately, Augereau was not endowed with that creative activity that enables a man to draw from a large population all the resources it can afford. He had nevertheless endeavoured to feed and clothe his conscripts through the instrumentality of the Lyonnaise municipality; he brought from Valence some artillery, he recalled from Grenoble the feeble Marchand division, and sent aide-de-camps to Nîmes to seek there the division of reserve, which, like that of Bordeaux, had been intended to pass from the south to the north. By these means he had succeeded, in the beginning of February, in assembling, besides the thousands already at Lyon, 3,000 men that had come from Nîmes, and what was still better, 10,000 old soldiers, detached from the army of Catalonia, and with these forces he prepared to commence the campaign. But he wished to give his troops some days repose before encountering the enemy. It was undoubtedly a matter of vast importance that he should take the field, for his appearance alone in the direction of Châlons and Besançon would cause extreme alarm in the rear of the allied armies, and perhaps determine the retreat of Prince Schwarzenberg, which had not yet commenced. Napoleon, burning with impatience, wrote Augereau the following letter, which merits a place in history.

"Nogent-sur-Seine, 21st February, 1814.

"The Minister of War has just laid before me the letter you wrote him on the 16th. That letter annoyed me very much. What! six hours after receiving the first detachments that came from Spain, you were not in the field. Six hours rest was sufficient for the men. I won the battle of Nangis with the brigade of dragoons, that arrived from Spain, and who had not drawn breath from the time they left Bayonne. You say the six Nîmes battalions want clothes and arms, and are undrilled. What miserable reasons to offer to me, Augereau; I have destroyed 80,000 enemies with battalions

composed of conscripts, that had not cartouche-boxes, and were scarcely clothed. The National Guards, you say, are contemptible I have 4,000 here, from Angers and Brittany, in round hats, no cartouche-boxes, but that have good muskets; I have turned them to good account. There is no money, you say. And whence did you expect to draw money? You can only expect money when we shall have torn a receipt in full from the hands of the enemy. You want horses; take them wherever you can find them. You have no stores; this is too ridiculous. I command you to set out within twelve hours after the receipt of this letter to take the field. If you are still the Augereau of Castiglione, keep the command; if your sixty winters oppressed you too heavily resign the command to the oldest of your general officers. France is threatened and in danger; she can only be saved by daring courage and willing service, not by vain temporizing. You must have more than six thousand picked men with you; I have not so many, and yet I have destroyed three armies, taken forty thousand prisoners, two hundred pieces of cannon, and three times saved the capital of France. The enemy is flying in every direction. Be the first on the battle-field. This is not a time to act as we have done in these latter days; we must resume the arms, and call up the spirit of '93. When the French soldiers see your plume waving in the van of the battle, and your breast exposed to the fire of the muskets, you may lead them whither you please."

The army of Italy was not far distant from Augereau. Napoleon had sent orders to prince Eugene to re-pass the Alps and come down to Lyon, but these orders had arrived late, and not until Prince Eugene was already engaged in sharp combats with the Austrian army. Finding his right turned by the Austrian detachments, that English ships had landed on this side of the Adige, Prince Eugene had been obliged to abandon this river, which the army quitted with extreme regret. He had taken up a position behind the Mincio, his left at Goito, his right at Mantua, with a determination to make himself respected. In fact, seeing the Austrians occupied in passing the Mincio, on his left, in the direction of Valeggio, he had left a third of his army under the command of General Verdier, and crossed the river himself, passing over the the bridges of Goito and Mantua, then making a rapid flank movement, he had brought the entire mass of his soldiers to bear upon the Austrians as they were marching to the point were they intended to cross the river. He killed, wounded, or made prisoners between six and seven thousand men in the plains of Roverbella. He captured besides, a considerable quantity of artillery. The affair cost us about 3,000 men. Our loss was relatively, very considerable, but our troops had displayed the greatest vigour, and their young General exhibited military talents that were beginning to ripen. The Austrians in confusion regained the Adige, deferring their project of conquest until Murat should have fulfilled his promises.

Such was the intelligence that M. de Fascher, an Aide-de-camp of Prince Eugene, brought Napoleon, at the very time that the battle of Montereau was fought. It was a delicate subject, and one requiring profound deliberation, that of persisting in the determination to evacuate Italy, after a splendid victory on the Mincio, and still more splendid victories between the Marne and the Seine. When Napoleon had commanded this evacuation, he had done so, not alone on account of the necessity he was under of concentrating his forces, but in the hope that the troops he should draw from Italy would arrive on the Rhône in time to be useful there. The present position of affairs called for fresh consideration. Certainly, if Prince Eugene had been able to bring to Lyon, in time, the 30,000 soldiers that had just gained the battle of Roverbella, if he had been able to join these to General Suchet's 50,000 veteran troops, and that with such a force he had fallen, passing through Dijon, on the rear of Prince Schwarzenberg, it is probable that none of the Allies would have repassed the Rhine, and such a result would undoubtedly have repaid every imaginable sacrifice. But Napoleon, who learned too late, that the Allies intended to make a winter campaign, had not sent orders to Prince Eugene, until the end of January, to return to France, and the Prince was then engaged in the most difficult operations, from which he could not withdraw until victory should have crowned his arms. In fact, were the order for his recall persevered in, it would be impossible for him to be at Lyon before the end of March, and by that time Napoleon should either have yielded to his enemies, or been victorious over them. Moreover this retreat would be the voluntary abandonment of Italy, that is to say, the loss of a pledge which would be of such vast importance at Châtillon. Though at the actual time, Napoleon was only fighting for the line of the Rhine, still to hold firm possession of the Mincio and the Po, would be a means of facilitating the concession of the Rhine, by way of compensation. Having then little chance of bringing back the troops of Prince Eugene in time, and many chances of preserving Italy, which was of very great importance with regard to the negotiations, he took the resolution—which experience has since shown to be a deplorable one—not to abandon Lombardy. Though his reasons for this line of conduct were of incontestable value, he was evidently influenced by the confidence inspired by his late successes, and this is to be regretted, for the safest course would have been to recall Eugene with his thirty thousand men. In war, the chain of events is so easily prolonged, that we ought never to neglect a prudent precaution through fear of its being too late.

Napoleon had also to consider the position of the armies that were defending the Pyrenees, and whose assistance would have been so useful to him. Marshal Suchet was incessantly asking permission to evacuate Barcelona, and some of the fortresses in Catalonia. As to those of Lower Catalonia and the kingdom of Valentia, such as Sagonta, Penisscola, Tortosa, Mequinenza, and

Lerida, the time was past when they could have been opportunely evacuated. By withdrawing 7,000 or 8,000 men from Barcelona, and as many from some other small garrisons, and joining these 15,000 to the 15,000 that remained under his command after the division that had been sent to Lyon, Marshal Suchet would have at his disposal 30,000 soldiers. With such a force, he might still decide the fate of France, were he summoned to Lyon in person. He awaited the reply of the war minister until the 11th of February, when not having received any intelligence he returned to the frontier, leaving 8,000 men in the fortress of Barcelona, which he did not dare to abandon without a formal order. Napoleon endeavoured to repair this fault, which was exclusively imputable to the war minister, by giving Marshal Suchet orders to evacuate, not alone Barcelona, but all the posts he still occupied, and thus to create for himself *a corps d'armée*, with which he was to march on Lyon, leaving in Perpignan and the fortresses of Roussillon, only the garrisons, indispensably necessary.

Marshal Soult, thanks to Lord Wellington's temporizing system, had kept his position, not on the Bidassoa, nor the Niva, which he had lost, one after the other, but on the Adour and the *gave d'Oleron*. He had placed four divisions in Bayonne, under General Reille, two on the Adour under General Foy, and four behind the *gave d'Oleron*, which he commanded himself. General Harispe formed his extreme left at Navarreins, he formed the centre himself at Peyrehorade at the confluence of the *gave d'Oleron* with the Adour; General Reille formed his right at Bayonne. Master of the navigation of the Adour, he could provision Bayonne and supply with victuals and munitions of war every portion of his army. Thus posted behind the angle of two rivers, with about 40,000 veteran troops (deducting the 15,000 sent to Napoleon,) he held his adversary in check, who dared neither to advance without the Spaniards, for fear of not being sufficiently strong, nor penetrate into France with them, lest they might excite an insurrection amongst the French peasants by pillaging. The English General delayed to assume the offensive until, in the first place, the rains, which were very abundant, should cease, and secondly, until his government should send money to pay the Spaniards, which was the only means of preserving discipline amongst them.

Napoleon, still flattering himself to be able to draw some resources from this brave army, sent fresh orders to Marshal Soult to fill up the vacant places in his regiments with conscripts, and to be ready to send him at the shortest notice 10,000 men. Not wishing to leave Bordeaux unprotected, on account both of the moral and political importance of this city, Napoleon determined not to borrow these troops from Marshal Soult excepting he found himself at the last extremity. His late successes gave him reason to hope that he would not be forced to take this step.

The two days passed at Montereau, during which the troops were employed in crossing to the other side of the river, had been,

as we have seen, very usefully employed. Before leaving Montereau, Napoleon thought he ought to reply to the letter that Prince de Schwarzenberg's aide de-camp had brought him.

He had just learned what had taken place at Châtillon since the resumption of the conferences. On the 16th of February, M. de Caulaincourt received a private letter from M. de Metternich, in which this minister informed him of the efforts he had made to surmount the ill feeling that prevailed in the allied courts, acknowledging that to attain his object, he had made use of M. de Caulaincourt's confidential letter. He also informed the French plenipotentiary that by formally accepting the Châtillon bases, hostilities might be immediately stopped. M. de Metternich, in conclusion, earnestly begged M. de Caulaincourt to profit of this opportunity to conclude peace, "for," he said, "it will be the last."

The next day—the 17th—the plenipotentiaries assembled, and declared they would resume the conferences, only on receiving a positive affirmation from the French plenipotentiary, that he was ready to submit to the conditions proposed in the last sitting. They afterwards presented a series of preliminary articles, more insulting if possible than the protocol of the 9th of February. The import of these articles was that France should retire within her ancient limits, with some slight alterations of the frontier line, which did not alter in any way the general principle: she was not to interfere, in any way, in the fate of the ceded territories, nor in the general regulation of the European States; she was merely to be told that Germany should compose a federal state, that Holland, united to Belgium, should constitute one kingdom, that Italy should be independent of France, and that Austria should hold possessions there, the extent of which the allied powers would determine at a later period; that continental Spain should be restored to Ferdinand VII.; that in return for these sacrifices, England should give up Martinique, and Guadaloupe besides, if Sweden required it, but she was to keep the Isle of France and the Isle of Bourbon. As to the Cape, Malta, and the Ionian Isles, there was no more said of them than of all the possessions given up by France in Italy, Germany, and Poland.

Such were these articles, that were already laid down in the protocol of the 9th of February, but in a less explicit and less offensive manner; they were now offered as conditions for an armistice, which France had not officially demanded, and for which, above all, she had not promised to pay such a price.

M. de Caulaincourt listened calmly to these propositions, and said that, probably the Allies did not wish for peace, since to offers radically so vexatious, they added forms so insulting. He added, that he would receive a copy of these articles, in order to submit them to his sovereign, and that at a proper time he would communicate with the plenipotentiaries on the subject. They asked whether he had a counter-project to propose; he replied that he would present one at a later period; and we must say, notwith-

standing our respect for a man, who through pure patriotism had undertaken a most painful task, that the fear of compromising the interests of peace, hindered him perhaps from giving vent to his indignation. The diplomatists, in fact, who were opposed to him, believed, that though he might consider the propositions oppressive he would still accept them, and if they should have difficulties to encounter, they would arise from Napoleon's inflexible temper. It would have been better had M. de Caulaincourt exhibited as much indignation as Napoleon himself would have done. Such conduct might have compromised, not peace, which could always be obtained on the proffered conditions, but the imperial throne, and M. de Caulaincourt ought, like Napoleon, to have preferred honour to the throne. We must, however, admit, that though Napoleon might have reasoned in this way, M. de Caulaincourt, his minister, was not equally free to do so, for next to France, the throne of his master ought to be the chief object of his solicitude. Be this as it may, M. de Caulaincourt gave the most prudent advice to Napoleon. He said he was well aware that the proposed conditions of peace were not acceptable, but there were no means of ameliorating them; that, in fact, the Emperor could never obtain peace on the Frankfort bases, except by driving the Allies into the Rhine, but that, profitting of his late victories to effect a compromise, he might be able by satisfying England, to obtain better conditions than the limits of 1790, still he could never get what he understood by the natural limits. It was indeed possible by giving up Spain, Italy, all that he held of Germany, Holland and Belgium, to retain Mayence, Coblentz, and Cologne—in a word, to secure the Rhine by abandoning the Scheld. And certainly, peace, on such conditions, would be very satisfactory, if not to Napoleon, at least to France. With one more victory the Emperor might be sure of it, and it was wise to give him this advice. M. de Caulaincourt, without entering into details as to how much of the natural limits ought to be sacrificed, implored Napoleon not to be obstinate, and told him, very justly, that he was mistaken if he believed that his recent victories had replaced him in the position he held at the time the Frankfort bases were proposed, but that he might still obtain peace on terms approaching those of Frankfort, by presenting a moderate counter-project.

When Napoleon received these communications at Montereau, the blood rushed to his brow, and he immediately wrote the following letter to M. de Caulaincourt:—

"I look upon you as a man under compulsory confinement who knows nothing of my affairs, and whose opinions are formed on the reports of impostors. As soon as I arrive at Troyes, I shall send you a counter-project. I thank Heaven for receiving your despatch, for there is not a Frenchman whose blood it will not make boil with indignation. This is why I wish to draw up my ultimatum myself.

"I am very much displeased that you did not explain formally, that France, in order to be as strong as she was in 1790, must have

her natural limits as a compensation for the partition of Poland, the destruction of the Republic of Venice, the secularization of the German clergy, and the great acquisitions made by the English in Asia.

"Say that you are waiting orders from your government, and that it is very natural you should be obliged to wait, since your couriers are obliged to make journeys of seventy-two hours, and of three you have yet received no tidings. In retaliation, I have ordered the arrest of the English couriers.

"I am so excited by the infamous proposals you have sent me, that I feel myself already dishonoured by having placed myself in a position where such proposals could be made to you. I shall let you know, from Troyes or Châtillon, my intentions, and I believe I would rather lose Paris, than see such propositions made to the French people. You are always talking of the Bourbons, I would rather see the Bourbons in France, on reasonable terms, than submit to the infamous propositions you have sent me.

"Surville, near Montereau, 19th February, 1814.

His first emotions having subsided, Napoleon, appreciating the good advice of M. de Caulaincourt, consented to continue the negotiations, but no longer on the bases he had commissioned his plenipotentiary to bear to Manheim, and which comprehended the Rhine as far as the Wahal, a kingdom for Prince Jerome in Germany, one for Prince Eugene in Italy, and a part of Piedmont for France. These demands were no longer urged; the new bases only asked the limits *purs et simples*, that is to say, the Rhine as far as Dusseldorf; beyond Dusseldorf, the Meuse; nothing in Italy but an indemnity for Prince Eugene, and lastly, France's right to take part in regulating the fate of European states. Napoleon did not limit himself to this official communication; knowing that there existed more than one cause of misunderstanding between the Allies, that the Austrians were notoriously tired of the war, and offended at the affected supremacy of the Russians, he conceived the idea of replying to the proposals made him by addressing a letter himself to the Emperor Francis, and by having Major-General Berthier write one to Prince de Schwarzenberg. In these two letters, drawn up with extraordinary care, he endeavoured to speak the language, as he understood it, of sound policy and good sense. He said an appeal had been made to victory, and victory had decided; that his soldiers were still as great as ever, and would soon be as numerous; that he had full confidence in the result of this struggle, should it be prolonged; that notwithstanding he was marching at that moment on Troyes, and the approaching engagement would take place between a French and an Austrian army, that he believed he would conquer, and that his confidence on this point ought not to astonish any one; but that having experienced the chances of war, he was willing to consider this supposition as doubtful, and would therefore reason on a double hypothesis. Should he conquer, the coalition would be annihilated,

and the Allies would find him as exacting as ever, a line of conduct that would be authorized by his dangers and his triumphs. But if, on the contrary, he were conquered, the balance of power in Europe would be disturbed a little more than it already was, and that to the advantage of Russia, and at the expense of Austria: that the latter would be a little more constrained, a little more dictated to, by a haughty rival; that consequently Austria would gain nothing by a battle, which on one hand would deprive her of all the fruits of the battle of Leipsic, and on the other would render her more dependant than she was on Russia; that whatever Austria might desire, in Italy, for example, France would immediately concede to her, as soon as she consented to repass the Alps; that thus, without reckoning the ties of blood, which ought to have some influence, the true interest of Austria was to conclude peace, on the conditions she had herself offered at Frankfort.

To these reasons, mingled with many sweet and flattering words addressed to the Emperor Francis, Napoleon added others not less specious in a letter, intended for Prince de Schwarzenberg, and well calculated to touch the memory of this Prince, to awaken his military prudence, and stir up his pride, which the Russians and Prussians were incessantly offending. Both these letters were sent as a reply to the last proceedings of Prince de Schwarzenberg. Unfortunately, though very cleverly reasoned and written, they did not quite accord with the moral position of the allied powers, which Napoleon, in the midst of his camp, could not fully appreciate, Undoubtedly, had Austria been less strongly linked to the coalition, if she had not feared to break up this coalition, which, once broken, left her within the iron grasp of Napoleon, if she had not so deeply distrusted the character of the latter, she might have listened to considerations, which in many respects accorded with the policy of the Emperor Francis, with the wisdom of his Prime Minister, and with the wounded self-love of the Commander-in-Chief. But it was natural to suppose that Austria, instead of keeping these letters private, would show them to her Allies, in order to place her good faith above all suspicion, and that then there would be fresh protestations of fidelity, and that the bonds of the alliance would be more closely serried in order to resist an enemy, who alternately played the part of the lion and the fox. There was therefore more risked than gained by these communications with the court of Austria.

Be this as it may, Napoleon, after having attended to all his various concerns, and finding his troops amount to the number he desired, left the château of Surville on the morning of the 21st, crossed the Seine at Montereau, and re-ascended the river as far as Nogent; he found the country everywhere so ravaged, that despairing of victualling his troops, he earnestly implored that provisions should be sent from Paris. Even at Nogent, everything was in a frightful state, in consequence of the late engagement. He granted out of his private purse assistance to the sisters of charity, who

had ventured under the fire of the enemy in order to attend the wounded soldiers. He also gave relief to those of the inhabitants who had suffered most.

The next day—the 22nd—continuing to remount the Seine, he advanced in the direction of Méry, a point where the course of the Seine turns, and instead of continuing from west to east, describes a line from north-west to south-east, running from Méry to Troyes. Napoleon followed the high road to Troyes, bringing with him the troops of Marshal Oudinot (division of the young Rothenbourg Guard and the Boyer d'Espagne division), the Old Guard, Ney and Victor's division of the Young Guard, the cavalry reserve, and lastly, the artillery reserve. On the right, through the cross-roads, Marshal Macdonald advanced with the 11th corps; a little more to the right General Gérard advanced with the 2nd corps and the Paris reserve. On the other bank of the Seine, in the neighbourhood of Sézanne, Grouchy was preparing with his cavalry and the Leval division to join Napoleon, by the way of Nogent, and Marmont, with the 6th corps, occupied the country between the Seine and the Marne, for the purpose of observing Blucher's movements, and combining his forces with those of Marshal Mortier, who had orders to advance on Soissons. Napoleon's forces, including the troops of Grouchy and Leval, but not those of Marmont, amounted to about 70,000

Napoleon was still expecting and most anxious for a battle; since the commencement of the campaign until now, he had not had 70,000 men under his command, without reckoning Marmont's troops, that one day's march sufficed to join with his. Thus, as we have already said, seeking a combination that might render this battle decisive, Napoleon had abandoned the design of pursuing Prince de Schwarzenberg along the high road of Troyes, and had conceived the project of crossing the Seine at Méry, and remounting the river rapidly along the right bank, leaving Prince de Schwarzenberg on the left; he would thus reach the high ground of Troyes before his opponent, and then recrossing the river, offer him battle between Troyes and Vandœuvres, after having mastered his line of retreat.. Should this plan be executed, the most important results would undoubtedly ensue.

On the morning of the 22nd, orders having been given for the carrying out of these designs, our vanguard drove back Prince de Witgenstein's rear-guard towards Châtres, and threw themselves afterwards on the bridge of Méry, which is very long, because it spans several arms of the river and a great deal of marshy ground. This bridge, built on piles, had been half-burned; nevertheless, our sharp-shooters, running on the tops of the piles, kept up a keen combat with the enemy's sharp-shooters, and succeeded in getting possession of Méry. But soon, a violent conflagration bursting out in the city stopped our progress. The Russians had set fire to Méry. The heat became so intense that we were obliged to cede the place, not to the enemy, but to the flames, and regain the banks

of the Seine. At the same moment numerous troops appeared outside Méry, and there was no passing beyond. These troops that made their appearance, were neither the Russians of Prince de Wittgenstein, nor the Bavarians of Marshal Wrède, who might have been naturally expected in that direction, but the Prussians themselves, whom the 15th Mortier were pursuing from the Marne, and who, for some time past, had seemed to take no part in the warfare. Within seven days they had rallied and returned, with whom? under what leader? Here are questions that might naturally be asked, and which Napoleon asked himself with well-founded astonishment.

His inquiries were soon satisfied by prisoners and reports that arrived from the banks of the Marne. Since the Emperor had beaten in detail the four corps of the army of Silesia, these corps had endeavoured to recover their defeat, and had partly succeeded. Finding themselves briskly pursued along the Soissons route, the Generals d'York and Sacken had turned to the right, and marching through Oulchy, Fismes, and Reims, had regained Châlons, where Blucher had appointed to meet them. Combined with the *débris* of Kleist and Langeron, they formed a force of 32,000 men. The pride of this army had been deeply humiliated. Composed of the most ardent spirits amongst the Russians and the Prussians, having at their head the daring Blucher, and all the confederates of the Tugend-Bund, they were inconsolable at having experienced such terrible reverses, especially as they had mocked the timidity of the army of Bohemia. For this reason, the desire of again appearing in the battle-field was intense among Blucher's soldiers, and they possessed the merit of wishing to repair their disaster at any risk. An opportunity had seemed to offer of which they had eagerly profitted.

Marmont, after the terrible day of Vauchamps, had stopped at Etoges. This break in the pursuit, on the part of the French, indicated clearly that Napoleon, repeating against the army of Bohemia the manœuvre that had succeeded so well against the army of Silesia, had fallen upon Prince de Schwarzenberg. This conjecture amounted to certainty, when it was remembered that Prince de Schwarzenberg having advanced as far as Fontainebleau and Provins, Napoleon could not allow him to come nearer Paris without making an attempt to stop his progress. Nothing now remained for the army of Silesia but to advance immediately from the Marne to the Seine, where they would probably find the Marmont detachment that had been left to observe Blucher's army, and on which they would revenge themselves for the four terrible days of defeat they had experienced.

These resolutions being taken, Blucher had given his troops only two days' repose, and had sent courier after courier to Prince de Schwarzenberg to inform him of his new enterprise. The arrival of considerable reinforcements had confirmed him in his projects. He had had hitherto only about half of the Kleist and Langeron corps.

The remainder of these two corps, which had been replaced by others in the blockade of the fortresses, had now joined. The corps of Saint-Priest, at first sent in the direction of Coblentz, arrived also; and on the 18th, Marshal Blucher, marching from Châlons to Arcis, had received a reinforcement of from 15,000 to 16,000 men; so that his army, which Napoleon had reduced from more than 60,000 to 32,000, was already suddenly increased to 48,000 combatants, and was consequently in a position to make a formidable move—so true is it that in war passion often supplies the place of genius, substituting the power of the will for that of the intellect.

Blucher had therefore set out for Arcis, and having learned on the way that Prince de Schwarzenberg, fallen back on Troyes, was waiting his arrival there, in order to engage the enemy; he advanced in a straight line on Méry, to arrive sooner at the meeting place, and be able to fall on the flank of the French army, which he believed to be still pursuing the army of Bohemia.

Napoleon, finding Blucher on the right bank of the Seine, could not any longer think of throwing his troops into that quarter. Though he did not for a moment imagine that the Prussian General could have so soon assembled an army of 50,000 men, he cared little for his appearance, and did not despair of meeting Prince de Schwarzenberg hand to hand on the morrow or next day, and overthrowing him. His soldiers again believed in their own superiority, he in his good fortune, and they all marched forward joyfully to the great battle that was about to take place. Napoleon resolved to march the next day, the 23rd of February, on Troyes.

But whilst he was seeking this battle, his principal adversary avoided the encounter. Prince de Schwarzenberg was justly alarmed at finding himself in the presence of Napoleon, whom he believed at the head of considerable forces, and he dreaded to risk the fate of the coalition on a battle. He had received exaggerated reports as to the number of troops arrived from Spain, and as to their valour he had experience of that at the battle of Nangis. He did not estimate Napoleon's forces at less than 80,000 or 90,000 men, their spirits flushed with victory and the consciousness of being in a remarkable position. Separated from Blucher, of whose near approach he was not aware, he was reduced to 100,000 men, in consequence of the battle he had fought and the detachments he had been obliged to send off. These 100,000 men were not so concentrated as the 80,000 attributed to Napoleon, and it did not appear wise to Prince de Schwarzenberg to venture a hundred against eighty, when with 170,000 he had been held in check at La Rothière by 50,000 (this was the number erroneously attributed to Napoleon on that day). And then, should the Allies be beaten, they would be at one blow flung back upon the Rhine, and so lose, in one day, the fruits of the two campaigns of 1812 and 1813, which would render the common oppressor more exacting, more tyrannical than ever. As for the Russians and the Prussians, ruled by passion, and who had much to gain by victory, if they had much

to lose by defeat, there might be, on their side, cogent reasons for incurring great risks; but for the Austrians, who ran the chance of losing in one day what they had gained in a year, and the possession of which Napoleon offered to secure to them without fighting—they, to whom victory only promised an augmentation of Russian preponderance—truly, the prolongation of the warfare would not be worth the trouble to the Austrians. Napoleon's double letter, though involving the disadvantage of too openly revealing his intention of creating dissensions amongst his enemies, had not, however, failed to excite some discontent, by awakening in the Austrian mind very natural reflections. One disquieting circumstance was, moreover, added to those that already existed in favour of an armistice. Whilst the Allies had received positive intelligence of the arrival of a powerful detachment at Paris, by the Orleans route, a report was circulated that a still stronger detachment, commanded by Marshal Suchet in person, had arrived at Lyon from Perpignan; but in the stirring times of war, the public mind becomes impressionable, and facts are exaggerated to a stature that renders them falsehoods. The Count de Bubna, posted between Geneva and Lyon, fearing to be attacked by 50,000 or 60,000 men, begged immediate assistance, and prognosticated dreadful calamities if his entreaties did not meet proper attention. What, in fact, would become of the Allies, were a battle fought and lost in Franche-Comté in their rear? To prevent so calamitous an event, it would be necessary to send immediately 20,000 men to the assistance of Count de Bubna, which would be, in fact, to reduce the main army to 80,000, and so stand before Napoleon with forces of nearly the same numerical strength as his; this would be a serious indiscretion. There was certainly Blucher, whose actual force Prince de Schwarzenberg was ignorant of, but he knew the obstinacy of his temper to be such, that he could not flatter himself with having at his disposal the 40,000 or 50,000 men that the Prussian General might bring with him.

Influenced by these reasons, which were of some weight, the prudent Prince de Schwarzenberg thought it better to avoid a pitched battle, and to fall back on Brienne, Bar-sur-Aube, and Langres, and to wait there the coming reinforcements, sending at the same time 20,000 men to the Count de Bubna; and meanwhile, in order to avert an attack from Napoleon, Prince de Schwarzenberg thought it advisable to reply to his double letter, and to propose an armistice—an armistice which might perhaps lead to peace, or if it did not lead to peace, might afford time to make sure of victory.

These considerations were debated the same day—the 22nd—in a council held at head-quarters, in presence of the three sovereigns, the generals, and ministers of the coalition. Alexander, lately so hot-headed, dared not become suddenly the apostle of temporisation, but both his sentiments and language were less haughty than before. The violent party, though deprived of Blucher and his staff, who were at Méry, found, however, some speakers who declared that to

fall back would be a weakness, of which the moral effect would certainly be fatal; that in the position in which the Allies then were, they should either conquer or perish; that by a junction with the army of Silesia, their forces would be nearly double those of Napoleon, and that consequently they must conquer, for it would be degrading to suppose they could be vanquished when they fought with the advantage of two to one on their side; that in any case they had no other resource, for a retrograde movement would totally ruin the affairs of the coalition; that to return to Langres would be to go back to a country poor in itself, and impoverished still more by the recent visit of the armies—they could not find provisions there, and the retreat on Langres would soon involve a retreat on Besançon; that falling back in that manner would restore Napoleon all his prestige as well as all his partizans, and induce the French peasants, who had already killed several of the allied soldiers that wandered from their ranks, to rise *en masse* and slaughter all who would not be formed into *corps d'armée*; that, in short, to hesitate, to fall back, was to perish.

No person could at this moment say whether the advocates of the prudent or the impetuous policy were right. If the latter estimated correctly the respective forces of the two armies, the former yielded to well-founded fears when they refused to stake all for all against Napoleon, for if he gained the battle—and in the actual disposition of his troops he had many chances of gaining it—the Allies would be thrown into the Rhine. We are, therefore, justified in saying that Prince de Schwarzenberg, though his calculations exhibited a certain timidity, was more in the right than his adversaries.

Be this as it may, the moderate party insisted, and as late events had added to their influence what Blucher and his partizans had lost, and as the Emperor Alexander supported Blucher's party less warmly, Prince de Schwarzenberg's opinion prevailed, and the proposition of an armistice was resolved on. This proposition did not pledge the Allies to anything, neither as to the conditions of the peace nor the conditions of the armistice. Should the proposition not be accepted, it would at least occupy Napoleon's attention some hours, and perhaps delay his march a day, which would be a matter of importance. If, on the contrary, the propositions were accepted, the Allies would find time to concentrate their forces, the one party at Langres, the other at Châlons, and reinforce their number considerably; and an acceptance would also afford a chance—which was the secret wish of Austria—of resuming pacific negotiations with greater hopes of success, for, hostilities once suspended, they would not be lightly resumed. The advocates of war *à outrance* consented to this proceeding, in the hope that it would lead to no result, and might perhaps procure a respite for a few hours, which all parties admitted would be an incontestable advantage. Prince de Schwarzenberg made choice of Prince Wenceslas de Liechtenstein to send to the French head-quarters, with the proposal of

appointing commissioners, who, at the outposts of the two armies, should arrange the conditions of the armistice.

On the 23rd, Napoleon was marching from Chartres on Troyes, when, within sight of the latter city, Prince Wenceslas de Liechtenstein presented himself and delivered Prince de Schwarzenberg's message. Napoleon, seeing the persistence of the Allies in demanding an armistice, concluded much too quickly that they were in a difficult position, and resolved to appear to listen to them, but without pausing in his progress, as it was not his part to extricate them from their embarrassment. He was elated by success, by the consciousness of the great deeds he had just accomplished, by the hope of those he would yet achieve, and felt no prudential promptings that might induce him to seem modest or circumspect—on the contrary, to boast might be his best policy. He adopted it, therefore, as much because it suited his feelings at the moment as because it accorded with the calculations he had made.

Prince Wenceslas having largely complimented him on the great deeds he had lately performed, Napoleon listened with visible satisfaction, talked a great deal of what he intended to do, exaggerated in an extraordinary manner the extent of his forces, complained of the insulting propositions that had been made him, and passing from one subject to another, asked if it were true that several of the Bourbon princes had already arrived at the head-quarters of the Allies. In fact, the Duke d'Angoulême had tried to get a reception at Lord Wellington's head-quarters; the Duke de Berry was on board a frigate at Belle-Ile, endeavouring by his presence to excite the people of Vendée; and lastly, the father of these two princes, the Count d'Artois himself, acting as representative of Louis XVIII., who had retired to Hartwel, had gone to Switzerland, then to Franche-Comté, to obtain admission to the head-quarters of the Allied sovereigns. However, none of these princes had yet succeeded in his enterprise.

The envoy of Prince de Schwarzenberg hastened to disavow, on the part of Austria, any participation in plots against the Imperial dynasty, and affirmed, which was true, that the Count d'Artois had been dismissed from head-quarters. This declaration gave Napoleon more pleasure than he cared to testify; he said he was about to consider the proposition that had been made him, and that he would send a reply from the city of Troyes, into which he intended to enter immediately.

This confidence, which it was very well to display to the Prussians and the Russians, was not so well-timed with regard to the Austrians, who were desirous of peace, and to whom hopes of attaining it ought to have been held out, in order to induce them to moderation in their views, or at least to hesitation in their counsels.

Having arrived at the gates of Troyes, Napoleon found there the rear-guard of the Allies, determined to make a defence; they even threatened to burn the city, if the French persisted in forcing an immediate entrance. Such a threat coming from the Russians was

something too serious not to command attention. A verbal agreement was made by which the one party was to leave Troyes the next day—the 24th—and the other was to enter the city, neither striking a blow, or at least committing any act of aggression or resistance that might endanger the city. Accordingly, on the next day, the last of the allied troops departed peacefully from Troyes, and our soldiers entered the town in the same manner. And Napoleon—who twenty days before had passed through this city almost a defeated man, his mind filled with dark presentiments, not knowing whether he should be able to defend Paris, and even necessitated to order that his wife, his son, the members of his government, and his treasury, should be removed from the capital—Napoleon, we say, now reappeared at Troyes, after having, with a handful of men, put to flight all the armies of Europe; and he beheld the Allies, late so insolent, now praying him, if not to lay aside his sword, at least to allow it to rest for a few days in the scabbard. Wondrous change of fortune! which proves that a man of determination and genius, by persevering in warfare, can sometimes draw unexpected and fortunate opportunities from circumstances apparently desperate. But was this last change of fortune sufficiently decisive to serve as a permanent basis for the future? Painful doubt, which it became the task of prudence united to genius to convert into certainty. With regard to the Allies, it would be necessary to combine the most skilful diplomacy with victory, in order to reduce the boasting of one party without depressing the moderation of the other, and seize, so to speak, on the wing, the favourable opportunity for arranging a very difficult task, that of negotiating propositions, intermediate between those of Frankfort and Châtillon. That was the problem that remained to be solved. Napoleon, unfortunately, trusted too much to his wonderful change of fortune to be prudent, and it is true that at this moment he was justified in indulging the strongest hopes, if he only looked at external appearances. Ah! that we, too, could indulge the same hopes, and conjure up, even for an instant, a flattering illusion during this sad recital of past events, for in 1814 the question at issue was not the fate of a man, no, nor of that which, next to our native land, is perhaps the most interesting consideration in the world, the destiny of a great man—no, it was the destiny of France that was at stake—France, half whose greatness might still be preserved, and for whom Mayence might be saved by the sacrifice of Antwerp.

END OF THE LII. BOOK.

BOOK LIII.

FIRST ABDICATION.

INTERNAL state of Paris during Napoleon's late military operations—Secret party intrigues—Position of M. de Talleyrand; his views; mission of M. de Vitrolles to the allied camp—Conference of Lusigny; instructions given to M. de Flahaut relative to the conditions of the armistice—Efforts on our part to prejudice the question of the frontiers, by tracing the line of separation of the armies—Retreat of the Prince de Schwarzenberg to Langres—Grand council of the Allies—The war party wishes that Wintzingerode and Bulow's corps should be united to Blucher's army, in order to put the latter in a position to march on Paris—The difficulty of withdrawing these corps from Bernadotte removed in an extraordinary manner by Lord Castlereagh—The latter profits of this opportunity to propose the treaty of Chaumont, which binds the coalition for twenty years, and thus becomes the basis of the Holy Alliance—Joy of Blucher and his party: his march to join Bulow and Wintzingerode—Peril of Marshal Mortier, who was sent beyond the Marne; and of Marmont, who was left between the Aube and the Marne—These two marshals succeed in combining their forces, and giving a check to Blucher, whilst Napoleon hastens to their aid—Rapid march of Napoleon on Meaux—Difficulty of crossing the Marne—Blucher, protected by the Marne, tries to overpower the two marshals, who have taken up a position behind the Oureq—Napoleon crosses the Marne, joins the two marshals, and sets out in pursuit of Blucher, who is obliged to retire on the Aisne—The almost desperate position of Blucher, now threatened to be pushed into the Aisne by Napoleon—The reduction of Soissons, which gives the Allies the command of the bridge of the Aisne, saves Blucher from certain destruction, and procures him a reinforcement of 50,000 men, by the union of Wintzingerode and Blucher—Critical situation of Napoleon, and his impassible firmness on this sudden change of fortune—His first impulse, to march upon the fortresses, collect the garrisons, and fall, with 100,000 men, on the enemy's rear—It is necessary first to face Blucher, and give him battle—Napoleon captures the bridge of Berry-au-Bac, and crosses the Aisne with 50,000 men, in sight of Blucher's 100,000—Perils of a battle to be fought with 50,000 men against 100,000—Reasons that decide Napoleon to capture the plateau of Craonne, in order to advance to Laon, by the Soissons route—Bloody battle of Craonne, fought on the 7th March, in which Napoleon carries the formidable positions of the enemy—After having seized the Soissons route, Napoleon wishes to penetrate into the plain of Laon, to complete the defeat of Blucher—New and more sanguinary battle of Laon, fought on the 9th and 10th March, and the issue undecided, through Marmont's fault, who allowed himself to be surprised—Napoleon is obliged to retreat on Soissons—His indomitable energies in an almost desperate position—Saint Priest's corps having approached, he charges, cuts the corps in pieces, in the neighbourhood of Reims, after having killed the General—Napoleon, finding himself in danger of being enclosed between the armies of Schwarzenberg and Blucher, resolves to execute his great project of marching on the fortresses, rally the garrisons, and fall on the rear of the Allies—His directions for the defence of Paris during his absence—Consternation of the capital—The Council of Regency being consulted, wishes that the propositions of the Congress of Châtillon should be accepted—Indignation of Napoleon, who threatens to shut up in Vincennes, Joseph and all those who speak of submitting to the conditions of the enemy—Events that have taken place in the South, the battle of Orthez, after which Marshal Soult advanced on Toulouse, leaving Bordeaux unpro-

tected—Entrance of the English into Bordeaux, and the Bourbons proclaimed in that city on the 12th March—Vexatious effect produced by these events at Paris—Napoleon, seeing the alarm of the capital, towards which Prince Schwarzenberg has advanced considerably, determines, before marching on the fortresses, to present himself suddenly in the rear of Schwarzenberg, and divert his course from Paris to attack him—Movement from the Marne to the Seine, and passage of the Seine at Méry—Napoleon finds himself unexpectedly facing the army of Bohemia—Battle of Arcis-sur-Aube, fought on the 22nd March, on which occasion, 20,000 French opposed, during an entire day, 90,000 Russians and Austrians—Napoleon at length resolves to recross the Aube, and protect himself by this river—He advances on Saint-Dizier, in the hope of drawing the army of Bohemia after him—His project for advancing as far as Nancy, to rally there 40,000 or 50,000 men from the different garrisons—*En route*, he is joined by M. de Caulaincourt, who has been obliged to leave the congress of Châtillon, in consequence of his refusal to accept the propositions of the Allies—Termination of the congress of Châtillon and the conferences of Lusigny—Napoleon does not regret what he has done, and does not yet despair of success—During this time, the armies of Silesia and Bohemia, between which he had ceased to manœuvre, have combined their forces in the plains of Châlons, and deliberate on what course to adopt—Grand council of the Allies—Military reasons show the importance of pursuing Napoleon, whilst political reasons tend to an opposite course, that of marching on Paris, and trying to effect a revolution in the capital—Intercepted letters of the empress and the ministers, determine the Allies to march on Paris—Influence of Count Pozzo di Borgo in producing this determination—Movement of the Allies towards the capital—Marmont and Mortier, being cut off from Napoleon, encounter the entire allied army—Disastrous day of Frère Champenoise—Retreat of the two marshals—Sudden appearance of the allied army before the walls of Paris—Incapacity of the war minister, and neglect of Joseph, who have made no preparation for the defence of the capital—Council of Regency, where it is resolved that the government and court should retreat to Blois—Instead of organizing a popular defence of Paris, they conceive the foolish idea of fighting a battle outside the walls—Battle of Paris, fought on the 30th March, by 25,000 French, against 70,000 of the allied soldiers—Bravery of Mortier and Marmont—Forced capitulation of Paris—M. de Talleyrand wishes to remain at Paris, and obtain a mastery over the mind of Marmont—Entrance of the Allies into the capital; their precautions; their conduct with regard to the different classes of the population—Polite attentions of the crowned heads to M. de Talleyrand, whom they make, in some sense, arbiter of the destinies of France—Events that take place in the army during the march of the Allies on Paris—Brilliant combat of Saint Dizier; fortuitous circumstance that undeceives Napoleon, and shows him, at last, that he is not followed by the Allies—The evident danger of the capital and the voice of the army, make him determine to retrace his steps—His hasty return—Napoleon, in order to arrive sooner, separates from his troops and arrives at Fromenteau between eleven o'clock and midnight, at the very moment when the capitulation of Paris was signed—His despair, his irritation; he quickly recovers himself—He suddenly conceives the project of throwing himself on the Allies dispersed in the capital, and scattered on the two banks of the Seine; but as his army has not yet joined him, he hopes to gain, by opening negotiations, the three or four days that must elapse before they can join him—He commissions M. de Caulaincourt to go to Paris to engage Alexander in negotiations, and he retires to Fontainebleau with the intention of concentrating his army there—M. de Caulaincourt accepts the mission confided to him, but with the secret resolve to sign a peace on any conditions—Reception given by the Emperor Alexander to M. de Caulaincourt—This prince, disarmed by success, becomes the most generous of conquerors. However, he promises nothing, except a becoming personal treatment for Napoleon—The allied sovereigns, with the exception of the Emperor Francis, retire to Dijon, and hold a council at M. de Talleyrand's, to decide on the form of government suitable to France—Legitimate principles happily expressed and strongly supported by M. de Talleyrand—Declaration of the crowned heads that they will not enter into further negotiations with Napoleon—Convocation of the senate—Formation of a provisionary government, at the head of which is M. de Talleyrand—Joy of the royalists; their efforts to get the Bourbons immediately proclaimed—Journey of M. de Vitrolles in search of the Count d'Artois—M. de Talleyrand, and some enlightened men by whom he is surrounded, moderate the movement of the royalists, and wish that a form of constitution should be drawn up which should be the express condition of the return of the Bourbons—Eagerness with which Alexander enters into these views—Napoleon's dethronement pronounced on the 3rd April, and a form of

constitution drawn up by the senate, as once monarchical and liberal—Fruitless efforts of M. de Caulaincourt in favour of Napoleon, both with Alexander and Prince Schwarzenberg—He is sent to Fontainebleau to persuade Napoleon to abdicate; meanwhile the Allies endeavour to seduce the heads of the army—In compliance with the advice of M. de Talleyrand, the principal attempts at seduction are practised on Marshal Marmont, who, at Essonne, forms the head of the colonne de l'armée—What takes place at Fontainebleau during the proceedings at Paris—Great projects of Napoleon—His conviction that, if seconded, he can overwhelm the Allies in Paris—His military arrangements, and his extreme confidence in Marmont, whom he has stationed on the Essonne—Evasive replies that he makes to M. de Caulaincourt, and his secret resolves for the morrow—Next day, the 4th April, he assembles the army and announces his determination to march on Paris—Enthusiasm of the soldiers and officers, lately so dejected—Consternation of the Marshals—The latter, assuming the representation of the wearied ones, remonstrate with Napoleon—Napoleon asks them if they wish to live under the Bourbons; on their unanimous reply that they wish to live under the King of Rome, he conceives the idea of sending them to Paris with M. de Caulaincourt, to obtain the transmission of the crown to his son—Whilst he feigns to carry on this transaction, he is still resolved on a great battle in Paris, and makes every preparation for that object—Departure of the Marshals Ney and Macdonald, with M. de Caulaincourt, to negociate the regency of Maria Louisa, and the abdication of Napoleon—Their meeting with Marmont at Essonne—Embarrassment of the latter, who acknowledges to them that he has secretly negociated with Prince Schwarzenberg, and promised to join the Provisional Government with his corps d'armée—On their remarks he withdraws the promise made to Prince Schwarzenberg, and orders his generals, whom he has taken into his confidence, to suspend their movements—He accompanies to Paris the deputation commissioned to negociate for the King of Rome—Interview of the Marshals with the Emperor Alexander—This prince, staggered for a moment, defers his decision to the following day—During this time, Napoleon having sent Marmont to Fontainebleau to prepare his great military operation, the generals of the 6th corps think they are discovered, quit the Essonne, and execute Marmont's suspended project—This intelligence decides the allied sovereigns, and the cause of the King of Rome is indefinitely abandoned—M. de Caulaincourt is sent to Napoleon to obtain his abdication *pure et simple*—Napoleon, deprived of Marmont's corps, and no longer able to attempt any serious movement, resolves upon abdicating—Return of M. de Caulaincourt to Paris, and his efforts to obtain a suitable treatment for Napoleon and the Imperial family—Generosity of Alexander—M. de Caulaincourt obtains the Isle of Elba for Napoleon, the Grand Duchy of Parma for Maria Louisa and the King of Rome, and pensions for all the princes of the Imperial family—His return to Fontainebleau—Napoleon attempts to commit suicide—His resignation—Loftiness of his sentiments and his language—Constitution of the senate, and entrance of the Count d'Artois into Paris on the 12th April—Enthusiasm and hopes of the Parisians—Departure of Napoleon for the Isle of Elba—General view of the greatness and errors of the Imperial reign.

BOOK LIII.

FIRST ABDICATION.

Napoleon wished to afford some comfort to the Parisians, who had of late been so terribly alarmed; he wished to make them enjoy his triumphs, and he wished above all to raise their spirits, which would be a serious advantage with regard to the organization of his forces, for little public aid can be obtained from a dispirited people. Influenced by these considerations, he had commanded a military and religious ceremony, for the reception of the standards, and the entrance into Paris of the twenty-five thousand prisoners captured from the enemy. He wished that these prisoners, crossing Paris from east to west, should traverse the entire extent of the boulevards, in order that the Parisians might be visually assured of the reality of the wonders performed by their Emperor. The difficulties of Napoleon's position must serve as an excuse for this ostentatious display.

When the approach of these prisoners was announced, all the population of Paris thronged to the boulevards, to see defile before them Prussians, Austrians, and Russians, marching disarmed, headed by their officers and generals. The prisoners, indeed, displayed no arrogance in their demeanour, neither did they seem utterly dejected; it was easy to discern in their faces a very different expression from that formerly manifested by the captives taken at Austerlitz and Jena. There was a certain look of confidence and real pride at having been captured so close to our capital.

Though the people of Paris were tired of the Imperial rule, and perfectly well aware of the bad effects of a despotism, which, after having formerly carried war even to the gates of the Kremlin, now brought it back to the foot of Montmartre, still the mass of the people, yielding to the impression of the moment, could not help applauding Napoleon's late successes, and experienced an intense satisfaction in beholding defile before them these foreign soldiers conquered and captive, whom they had feared to see enter Paris as conquerors and destroyers. As to the rest, with a delicacy natural to the French people, they offered no offence to the prisoners. Their

thoughtlessness, alas! had been too great. After the first emotion of triumph, the French lookers-on experienced a movement of pity, and more than one kind and compassionate creature offered an alms, that was received with sincere gratitude.

At court, affairs assumed a calmer aspect. Numerous visitors flocked round the Empress and the King of Rome, and amongst them were conspicuous those high functionaries, who, having believed the Imperial throne to be in danger, had, by removing to a distance, hoped to escape being crushed in the ruins. They reappeared in high spirits, though some seemed rather anxious about the reception they should receive, but all lauding the glorious campaign whose rashness they had condemned some days before; and they who, within the forty-eight hours, had declared that the Emperor was mad not to accept the frontiers of 1790, now exclaimed against so dishonouring a peace, and protested aloud that the Frankfort bases ought to be the absolute condition of the future peace. Maria Louisa was too little acquainted with our country to understand and judge these men; besides, she was now almost as much agitated by joy as she had before been by fear, but she gave all her visitors a kindly reception, and began to flatter herself that she should soon see a return of those glorious days that inaugurated her arrival in France.*

This joy, the thoughtlessness it induces and excuses, was by no means discernible amongst the adverse parties. Though these parties were distinct—the old revolutionists and the royalists—still both agreed in regretting the success of Napoleon, though the revolutionists experienced an emotion something like joy, so much did they dread the foreign powers and detest the Bourbons. The royalists, after having for a moment hoped the return of their beloved princes, asked themselves now, with vexation, whether they must suddenly abandon this hope. They sought an excuse for their secret wishes in the misfortunes that Napoleon had brought on France, and said within themselves that any hand, even that of a foreigner, ought to be welcome, if it delivered them from so odious a despotism. Still they contented themselves with forming wishes, and remained completely inactive. Whispered conversations between members of the ancient nobility and the clergy, malevolent reports, in which our reverses were exaggerated and our triumphs disputed, with an inert resistance to the measures of the administration, these constituted their entire efforts against the Imperial government. The emigrants, who since the revolution had lived abroad with the Bourbon princes, had almost lost the habit of corresponding with their friends in the interior of France. They made an effort to

* I do not fancy any thing. I quote these details from the correspondence of the Minister of Police, and from that of the High Chancellor, who informed Napoleon of the most minute details. I inform the reader of this for the hundredth, and happily the last time, for I am near the end of my task. But I do not weary of defending my responsibility as a historian, and this is a scrupulosity that the reader will pardon me, for it will prove to him, I hope, my love of truth.

resume their connections now, but met no encouragement, and indeed in the provinces threatened with invasion no one would have dared to aid them in proclaiming the Bourbons. A few royalists scarcely dared to venture a manifestation in the cities, already securely occupied by the allied armies. At Troyes, two old chevaliers of Saint Louis had presented a petition to Alexander, praying the re-establishment of the Bourbons. This was an act of imprudence, for which these unfortunate men paid dearly. At Paris, two members of the old nobility were talked of—the Messrs. de Polignac—who, having been transferred from a jail to a madhouse, had escaped, and gone at every risk to offer to the Count d'Artois their faithful services.

It was evident that nothing serious could be attempted by these men, who, during twenty-five years, had been too much estranged from French affairs to possess any influence in the country. It would be necessary that members of the actual government, some of whom were discontented with Napoleon, who had ill-treated them, and others who were desirous of securing a position for themselves under the new *régime*, should stretch forth a hand to the royalists if a plot of any importance were to be framed, every precaution being taken to conceal the movement. Something of the kind was actually attempted, but with profound secrecy and fear.

Of all the malcontents whom the Imperial *régime* had created, the most conspicuous—he who most occupied the minds of the friends of the Bourbons, as well as the friends of the Bonapartes—was M. de Talleyrand. He was the object of the hopes of the one party and of the fear of the other, and though he was in a position to play a great part, and on the eve of doing so, both parties greatly exaggerated what he could or what he would dare to do. Were the decisive moment come, Napoleon completely conquered, and the enemy in possession of Paris, it was incontestible that M. de Talleyrand was the only man capable of constructing a new government on the ruins of the overthrown dynasty; but to believe that he had either the ability or the will to take the initiative in a revolution, whilst the *drapeau tricolor* still floated on the Tuileries, was a groundless terror on the part of the Imperial police, and a pleasing illusion cherished in the royalist coteries. M. de Talleyrand's ill-will towards the Emperor was undoubtedly as strong as it could be, but neither the means at his disposal nor his personal courage were commensurate with his inclination. By refusing the portfolio of foreign affairs, two months previously, because he would not be allowed at the same time to keep his rank of grand dignitary, he had almost broken off his connection with the Imperial house, and, as we have seen, Napoleon had, on the very eve of his departure for the army, treated him in a manner calculated to awaken his most lively fears. He had learned from hints thrown out by persons connected with the Bourbons—what, indeed, he knew before—that the aid of a married bishop would be favourably received by these pious princes, for there is no difficulty that cannot

be overcome, when there is a question of services—not services already rendered, but which are to be rendered. Some persons have a very pliant memory—they forget or remember according to the interests of the hour. M. de Talleyrand, with his profound knowledge of men and things, had nothing to learn in his quality of politician; having finished with the Bonapartes, it was easy to recommence with the Bourbons. But he well knew the Duke of Rovigo—easy-mannered, familiar, even friendly with the persons upon whom he was acting as a spy, but capable, upon any serious suspicion, or at the first order from Napoleon, of laying his coarse soldier hand on the flowing mantle of a grand dignitary. Influenced by these considerations, M. de Talleyrand was extremely circumspect.

At his mansion in the *Rue Saint Florentin*, which has since become celebrated, M. de Talleyrand received, amongst other persons, the Duke de Dalberg, the Abbé de Pradt, and the Baron Louis.

M. de Dalberg was descended from the illustrious Dalbergs of Germany, and nephew to the Prince Primate. He was first an enemy, afterwards a friend to the Imperial dynasty. During the time when church property was being secularized, he came in for a large share, but he afterwards quarrelled with Napoleon, because the latter had transferred the lands of the Prince Primate to Prince Eugene. The Duke de Dalberg was short of stature; in manner, a mixture of the French and German; his countenance was animated, his temper lively; his opinions were frankly liberal, and his intellect strong and subtle. He had often given vent to his discontent at M. de Talleyrand's with a freedom that had brought his young wife into disgrace at court. He was annoyed at this, and did not conceal his vexation. The Abbé de Pradt had been banished to his diocese since his unfortunate embassy to Warsaw, an affair difficult in itself, and rendered still more so by the defects of the Abbé's temper. He had returned to Paris since our late reverses, and mingled his observations with those of the Duke de Dalberg in a tone that could not fail to attract the attention of the police, even had they been far less observant than they really were. Baron Louis had formerly taken minor orders, but afterwards abandoned the idea of entering the church, and devoted himself to the study of political economy. He was endowed with a true genius for finance, and a spirit at once active and persevering. He was an advocate of that legitimate liberty which sound policy sanctions; he detested the Imperial *régime* from motives dictated by an enlightened reason, and was always happy to associate with men of high intellect whose opinions corresponded with his own.

These personages and some others met frequently at M. de Talleyrand's, and there gave utterance to their sentiments. The petulant Abbé de Pradt declared with his characteristic vivacity and without circumlocution, that the Bourbons ought to be put in the place of the Bonapartes: the Duke de Dalberg spoke less openly,

though he was equally desirous of effecting the same object, and capable of working more systematically for the attainment of his ends. Baron Louis wished that a termination should be put to a despotism which during the last two years had exceeded all bounds. M. de Talleyrand heard all this with his ordinary air of languid indifference. He listened with attention sufficient to encourage the speakers, without compromising himself personally. Sometimes however he gave utterance to his sentiments with one of his visitors, rarely with two; but he always selected the Duke de Dalberg, of whose hardihood, dexterity, and numerous connections he was well aware, and from whom he might expect efficacious aid. He looked upon the Abbé de Pradt as a giddy-brain, and considered the Baron Louis as a profound financier, both useful on certain occasions, but he gave neither his confidence, for at that moment he did not need either the brilliant talents of the one, or the solid qualities of the other. He listened to their observations with a smile at once approving and evasive, and after having heard their opinions, he issued from his house and went to pay a visit to the Duke de Rovigo, under pretext of asking the news of the day. To the Duke, he testified the most lively interest in the success of the French army, affected to regret the inability of the greater number of Napoleon's agents, and said it was very unfortunate that so great a man should be so ill-served. In all this the Duke of Rovigo coincided, for this minister, discontented with the greater number of his colleagues, complaining of being no longer listened to by Napoleon, regretting that he was separated from M. de Talleyrand, was one of those who would listen to any reasonable criticism of the existing state of things, provided the censure sprang from a spirit of devotedness to the Imperial government, and not from a desire to overthrow it. With the Duke de Rovigo, M. de Talleyrand affected to be of the number of those who blame because they love, still he only half deceived his clear-sighted interlocutor, but he deceived him sufficiently to weaken the effect of the remarks uttered at the mansion, Rue Saint-Florentin. Having returned to his own house, M. de Talleyrand again listened to those daring conversations, but acknowledged only to the Duke de Dalberg his desire to withdraw from an insupportable yoke; with him he talked over the means, but was yet far from discovering them. To attempt anything whilst the Allies were still so distant from Paris, seemed to him impracticable. One idea had great weight both with the Duke de Dalberg and M. de Talleyrand: it was, that by manœuvring between the Seine and the Marne, and prolonging the negotiations at Châtillon, the Allies were preserving for Napoleon his only chances of safety. To break off all negotiation with him, and then point him out to France as the only obstacle to peace; to take advantage of an interval between the rejection of one set of propositions, and the framing of others, and seize upon the capital; these were, in their opinion, the only means of putting an end to the war. The Allies should have no sooner reached the gates of Paris, than

their friends inside would rise in their favour, and declare Napoleon dethroned. By these means they would break in his grasp the sword which it was impossible to wrench from him.

These were the ideas which M. de Talleyrand and the Duke de Dalberg wished to communicate to the allied sovereigns, but it is a singular proof of the little intercourse that existed between these in the city and those outside, that they had not been able to find anyone who might act as intermediary. Thus, though the Messrs. Polignac had succeeded in escaping, they had brought no communication from M. de Talleyrand nor from the Duke de Dalberg, the only men, at that moment, able to serve the Bourbon cause.

There was, however, at Paris, a gentleman of Dauphiné, possessed of high intelligence and courage. He had served formerly in the army of Condé, and, though still a royalist in feeling, had kept up a connection with his compatriot, M. de Montalivet, who had obtained for him the title of Baron and that of Inspector of the Imperial Sheepwalks. Notwithstanding the slender tie with which these demi-favours had attached him to the empire, he felt his heart bound at the slightest hope of again seeing the Bourbons in France. This Dauphinois gentleman was M. de Vitrolles. Fond of coming into contact with men in place, both through curiosity and ambition, he had made the acquaintance of the Duke de Dalberg, who knew all the restless spirits of the time and was known by them. The Duke introduced him to M. de Talleyrand, whom he sometimes visited. M. de Dalberg looking for a bold-spirited deputy, who would venture to repair to the head quarters of the Allies, and make known there his opinions and those of M. de Talleyrand, thought of M. de Vitrolles, and found him quite ready to undertake the journey. The difficulty was in accrediting M. de Vitrolles to these great personages—sovereigns and ministers—who held heir sittings at Langres, at Brienne, and at Troyes, as the exigencies of the war required. One man alone could give credentials that would secure a reception to the person that should come in his name, and this man was M. de Talleyrand. But he would never confide to anyone whomsoever, a positive proof of his having acted against the established government, and he had refused to send anything but very sensible advice, which could be transmitted verbally to the allied sovereigns and ministers. M. de Dalberg, who never hesitated when he could advance a step towards his object, did what M. de Talleyrand would not venture to do. A German by birth, he had frequently met M. de Stadion at Vienna; he furnished M. de Vitrolles some tokens, sufficient to prove incontestably that the bearer came from him, and sent him forth charged to relate what we have already explained, and what the Count Pozzo di Borgo repeated every day to the Emperor Alexander, that is to say, that the Allies ought to break off all communication with Napoleon, and march without delay on Paris. The armistice, which appeared to be in process of negotiation at the out-posts, and intelligence of which had already reached Paris, was, in the eyes of the Duke de Dalberg,

an additional reason for informing the Allies immediately, that, to negotiate with Napoleon was to stretch out to him a supporting hand at the very moment that he was about to fall. After having seen the sovereigns and the foreign ministers, M. de Vitrolles was to visit the Count d'Artois, who was reported to be at that time in Franche-Comté, and give him good advice, of which this prince stood more in need than the ministers of the coalition. M. de Vitrolles set out by the Sens route, with fictitious passports, and this he effected without the knowledge of the Duke de Rovigo. The secret of his mission was confined to himself, M. de Talleyrand, and the Duke de Dalberg. Being obliged to traverse the French and allied armies, he had numerous difficulties to overcome, and could not arrive very speedily at the head-quarters, whither he was bound.

Whilst these secret plots were being prepared, which, however, contributed much less than his own errors, to the fall of Napoleon, the latter had entered Troyes, and turned his attention to the conditions of the proposed armistice. The armistice, considered as a means of allowing the Allies to gain time whilst he lost it, presented no great advantages, for he wished, on the contrary, to meet them as soon as possible and fight a decisive battle. But the armistice would be useful to him as a means of negotiating more directly, more immediately under his own eye, and whilst the impression of his late successes was still vivid. He had, therefore, consented to send one of his aides-de-camp to the outposts, and had confided this mission to the Count de Flahaut.* His instructions were to refuse a suspension of hostilities during the negotiation, for Napoleon was unwilling, for the sake of exchanging a few remarks that might never produce any result, to allow Prince Schwarzenberg to escape. He was further instructed to require a preamble, declaring that the treaty for peace should be on the Frankfort bases, and, lastly, to draw the line of separation between the belligerent armies in such a way as to imply that Mayence and Antwerp were to belong to France. Should these conditions be accepted, Napoleon could, in fact, lay down his arms, for he would probably have no further occasion to resume them, as he was resolved not to continue the struggle, if the Allies allowed him to retain the line of the Rhine and the Alps. But to lay down his arms without a guarantee of the Frankfort bases, would be, in his eyes, to lose all the advantages he had lately acquired, fortune having now, as he believed, declared in his favour.

M. de Flahaut left Troyes on the 24th, the very day that Napoleon entered the city; he repaired to the village of Lusigny, about three leagues distant, and found there M. de Schouvaloff on the part of Russia, M. de Rauch to represent the interests of Prussia, and M. de Langenau for Austria. At this moment, Marshal

* These instructions are still at the office of the Secretary of State. They were not, as has been said, purely verbal. Their purport has, therefore, been very clearly ascertained.

Oudinot, pressing the enemy's rear-guard on Vandœuvres, was riddling with balls the very place where the negotiators were about to assemble. At M. de Flahaut's request, the Marshal turned his arms elsewhere, and the village of Lusigny was declared neutral ground.

The envoys of the allied powers appeared to desire a prompt solution of the impending difficulties. M. de Flahaut announced without delay the conditions of which he was the bearer, and he proposed two things—first, the continuation of hostilities during the negotiations, and, secondly, the insertion of a preamble ratifying the Frankfort bases. These two points were not of a nature to please the other envoys, for the first proposal deprived the armistice of its principal interest, and the second gave it a signification contrary to the designs of the coalition. Evidently discontented, the three commissioners replied, that they had not authority to treat diplomatic questions. To procure a short suspension of hostilities, and to fix temporarily the boundaries on which the belligerent armies should pause, constituted, they said, their sole mission. They wished to leave immediately, but M. de Flahaut detained them, and begged them to ask for fresh instructions, promising to do the same himself. They consented to remain at Lusigny, on condition that all the commissioners should write to their respective head-quarters for fresh instructions.

Napoleon, though he was firmly resolved not to yield on the question of the natural frontiers, and that for this reason he did not wish to interrupt the course of his successes, excepting to be assured of the Frankfort bases, still he was not wholly indifferent to the advantage of concluding an armistice, which would be equivalent to signing the preliminaries of peace, and which would induce a momentary tranquillization of the intense animosity excited against him. He therefore abandoned the preamble, which it was difficult to insert in a mere armistice, and consented to the continuation of the negotiations, hoping, by some happy circumvention to return to his original object. If, for example, in fixing the limits that were to separate the armies, he could persuade the Allies to leave him Antwerp, as a boundary in the Low Countries, and Chambéry, in the direction of Savoy, he would induce, from this concession, the strongest presumption for the definite regulation of the frontiers. He consequently authorized M. de Flahaut to continue the negotiations commenced at Lusigny, even though the preamble touching the Frankfort bases should not be accorded; but he was to propose that the allied armies should retire beyond Antwerp in the Low Countries, and that in Savoy they should not advance to Chambéry, to which they were then very near. If the allied commissioners accepted this line of demarcation, it would be a presumption in favour of the natural frontiers, which, without being equivalent to the mention of the Frankfort bases, would be, in point of fact, an acceptation of the natural frontiers.

It was according to these instructions that M. de Flahaut was to continue the negotiations at Lusigny. General Langenau, who

had fallen ill, had been replaced by General Ducca, who was bearer of the most pacific assurances and advice from the Emperor Francis. The new Austrian envoy was charged earnestly to advise Napoleon, through M. de Flahaut, not to persevere in continuing the war, for the present opportunity was the last when he could, under the influence of his recent successes, treat advantageously. The advice was excellent, if by making certain sacrifices Napoleon could obtain better terms than the frontiers of 1790—if, for example, by giving up Antwerp and Brussels, he could retain Mayence and Cologne. But if this advice meant that, in order to save the dynasty, it would be necessary to abandon all the acquisitions made by France since 1790, the advice, which it was natural to a father-in-law to give, would be unbecoming in Napoleon to follow, and his determination to perish, though his ruin should involve that of thousands of men, was more consonant with his real glory and the true interests of France.

In the official conferences, Messrs. de Schouvaloff, de Rauch, and Ducca declared, as might have been foreseen, that they had met merely to consider some military arrangements; that all consideration touching other subjects was entirely foreign to their mission; that they had received formal instructions to abstain from such matters; and that, consequently, the required preamble was inadmissible.

This declaration not having produced on M. de Flahaut's part a rupture of the conferences, the commissioners proceeded to the discussion of the line of demarcation. The French commissioner proposed his conformable to the views we have explained; the allied commissioners proposed theirs, conformable to the political resolutions of their courts. They wished to advance northwards as far as Lille; they consented to retrograde a little in Champagne and Burgundy, leaving the possession of Vitry, Chaumont, and Langres an open question, but they obstinately refused any concession touching Chambéry, and thus, like Napoleon, they reproduced indirectly in the conditions of the armistice the fundamental pretensions of their respective courts. The discussions continued, and the deputies again applied for fresh instructions, which would necessarily prolong the negotiation for some days.

The conferences might have been broken up now, for it was easy to see that the deputies would not come to an agreement, unless some important military events occurred immediately. But it did not suit either party to break off just then, for these negotiations, not causing a suspension of hostilities, did no injury to either side, and Prince Schwarzenberg hoped, that during the negotiations, Napoleon's military operations might in some degree be relaxed. Napoleon, on his side, though firmly determined to continue the struggle, still feeling the necessity of peace, did not wish to close this way of obtaining his object by negotiation, which now opened to his view. He could at any moment shut it up by a single word, and by leaving it open he had a resource in case of necessity, and

the means of arresting the up-raised arm of the combatants. He, therefore, allowed his commissioner to discuss with those of the Allies the innumerable sinuosities of a line of demarcation, which, commencing at Antwerp, was to terminate at Chambéry.

During the two days that the negotiations lasted—the 24th and 25th February—Napoleon was unfortunately guilty of an act of vengeance, the combined result of premeditation and anger.

On entering into Troyes he was assailed by cries from a portion of the population, denouncing certain individuals, guilty, as they said, of having treated with the enemy during their stay in the capital of Champagne. Though everybody was tired of the Imperial *régime*, still, at the sight of foreigners and at the name of the Bourbons, this unanimity of opinion disappeared to give place to the old party divisions. The partizans of royalty, on making their appearance, awakened in the hearts of the revolutionists a very natural anger, especially when they saw the royalists appeal to the enemies of France to secure the triumph of their cause. At Troyes, two chevaliers of Saint Louis, Messrs. de Vidranges and de Gonault, displayed the white cockade, and presented an address to Alexander, praying the restoration of the Bourbons. It was the first manifestation of this kind that the allied sovereigns had met since their entrance into France, and Alexander, with a sentiment of humanity that does him honour, did not omit remarking to those who had indulged in this exhibition of royalty, that nothing was more variable than the movements of armies, alternately exposed to advance or retire; and, above all, that nothing being more uncertain than a change of dynasty in France, he feared they had committed an imprudence which might be fatal to them. Spite of this observation, the imprudence was committed, and the royalists of Troyes had done nothing to extenuate it. They had, on the contrary, displayed a kind of ostentation, indicative certainly of courage, in decking themselves with the white cockade.

The people of Troyes, though many royalists were to be found amongst them, were very much irritated against those who had appeared to sympathise with the enemy. On this account, denunciations smote the ears of Napoleon on every side when he entered the city. On hearing what had taken place his anger blazed forth and he ordered the arrest of those who had been pointed out to him as criminals. Reflection, instead of calming his passion, rather served to excite it. At this moment the news arrived of the sudden appearance of the Count d'Artois in Franche-Comté, whilst the Duke d'Angoulême appeared in Guyenne, and the Duke de Berry off the coast of Brittany. It might happen that the royalist movements would serve the allied armies, and even produce a bad effect at Paris. Napoleon, therefore, resolved to stop these party movements by a severe measure, which, falling on one or two rash men, would have the effect of restraining others. The crime committed at Troyes could easily be proved, the law was unquestionably clear on the matter, and the process of military law which the

condition of the country warranted, was rapid and certain in execution.

Napoleon gave orders to arrest the accused, and bring them before this exceptional tribunal. M. de Vidranges, one of the two accused, had taken flight. M. de Gonault, an old white-headed man, who had been drawn into this affair by others, had not thought of escaping. He was arrested, judged, condemned, and delivered over to the power of the military law.

An excellent man, equerry to the Emperor, and devoted to his person—M. de Mesgrigny—a native of Champagne, anxious to save his compatriots, threw himself, with the family of the criminal, at the feet of Napoleon. The latter, whose anger was quick but transient, was touched at the sight of the suppliants, and said: "Well, let him be pardoned, if there is still time." The friends of the accused hastened to announce the pardon, but the unfortunate old man was already shot.

Napoleon sincerely regretted this event, but when thousands of human beings were falling every instant around him, he was not the man likely to dwell long on such incidents. He again turned his attention to that theatre, where he was called on to direct the most important events, and which succeeded each other with wondrous rapidity. At this moment, in fact, new movements were discernible on the part of the enemy, which had the effect of exciting his genius to the creation of new and formidable combinations.

Prince Schwarzenberg had fallen back on Chaumont, having left at Bar-sur-Aube the Bavarians of the Marshal de Wrède, the Russians of Prince Wittgenstein; and along the Aube the Wurtembergers of the Prince Royal, with the Austrian corps of Giulay. He had at Chaumont even the Russian and Prussian guards, and a corps of grenadiers and cuirassiers, that constituted a part of the Austrian reserve. He had detached a portion of Colloredo's corps through Dijon on Lyon, to go to the relief of Bubna. His forces were consequently greatly diminished; he had not more than 90,000 men under his command.

Blucher had remained between the Seine and the Aube, manœuvring from Méry to Arcis with 48,000 men, awaiting impatiently a signal for the pitched battle, in which he flattered himself to be able, not alone to avenge his recent humiliations, but to seize the keys of Paris. When his staff learned that the Commander-in-Chief had abandoned the idea of fighting this battle, and had even fallen back on Langres, there was, as may be easily supposed, a violent outcry raised against the Austrians, against their weakness, their duplicity, and intrigues. The temporising Austrian, Prince Schwarzenberg, was treated as men of his stamp have always been by their irritable *confrères*. The Prussians said that if the troops of Maria Louisa's father abandoned the cause of the Allies, that should not prevent them from marching on Paris; they would be able to make their way to that city, spite of Napoleon, and spite of his boasting soldiers, that now thought themselves all-victorious.

The Prussians certainly had reason to feel proud and self-confident, when they thought of Montmirail and Vauchamps.

And yet in this fiery-spirited Prussian staff there was no authority for action, but what was assumed in disobeying the King of Prussia; and though they were quite willing to make use of this species of authority, they were not daring enough to venture a march on Paris with 48,000 men. They had recourse to the usual means. They applied to the Emperor Alexander, whom they were sure of bringing over to their opinions by flattery, and accordingly sent emissaries to ask him two things—liberty of action for the army of Silesia, and a considerable augmentation of troops, which could be easily procured. This augmentation might consist of the addition of Bulow and Wintzingerode's corps, the one Prussian, the other Russian; that after leaving detachments in the Low Countries to blockade the fortresses, were advancing through the Ardennes. These troops should, indeed, be withdrawn from Bernadotte, under whose command they then were; but there were many causes of complaint then existing against the Swedish Prince. The Prussians questioned his capacity, his courage, and his honesty. They pronounced him to be a soldier without energy, and a traitor to the interests of Europe, occupying more than 100,000 men in his own affair of Norway, and thus endangering the safety of the coalition, through want of sufficient forces to concentrate on a defensive point. Bernadotte had, it is true, at last marched to the Rhine, whither he had been preceded by Bulow and Wintzingerode's corps. "But," the Prussians said, "he would always make use of these troops for the advancement of his personal views, trying to become, for example, Emperor of the French, if from the throne of Sweden he could spring upon that of France." By withdrawing Bulow and Wintzingerode's 50,000 men from Bernadotte, and putting them under the command of Blucher, the latter would have 100,000 men under his command, and might, by advancing on Napoleon's rear, dissipate the phantom that kept Prince Schwarzenberg motionless, through terror, at Chaumont.

Such were the sentiments that Blucher's envoys were commissioned to express to the Emperor Alexander, and these sentiments were likely to be well received, with the exception of what was directed against his *protégé*, Bernadotte.

Alexander listened to what was said with much satisfaction and goodwill. Some days had elapsed since the mischances of Nangis and Montereau, and his lively imagination, having recovered the shocks then experienced, was again inflamed in contemplating the prospect of entering Paris, which was now laid open before him. He listened favourably to Blucher's propositions, and convoked a council of the Allies, to take them into consideration. The discussion was very warm. Besides the three sovereigns, there were present at this council, Messrs. de Metternich, de Nesselrode, de Hardenberg, Lord Castlereagh, Prince Schwarzenberg, and the principal Generals of the coalition. Alexander condemned the

armistice and the temporizing system, insisted on the necessity of carrying on the war with vigour, and declared that, for his part, he was willing to carry it on with his faithful ally the King of Prussia, should the others abandon him, upon which the Emperor Francis demanded whether he was no longer numbered amongst those of the coalition that could be reckoned on. Thereupon the allied sovereigns shook hands, and agreed upon the necessity of acting promptly and vigorously, so as to leave no respite to the common enemy. After some explanations more unanimity of opinion was found to exist amongst them than was at first expected. Both sides admitted that the armistice compromised no principle, for it did not even suspend hostilities, and the only proposition that could either directly or indirectly derogate from the propositions of Châtillon had been carefully removed. There was consequently no change in the actual position of the allied powers. They had certainly paused at Chaumont, but it was the result of a very natural prudence that they should remain at a distance from Napoleon, whilst they were obliged to lessen their own strength by sending to Count de Bubna, at Dijon, succours that were declared indispensable. As to the rest, the formation of a powerful army that might act on Napoleon's flanks and force him to fall back was an excellent project, to which no objection could be made if the means existed of carrying it into effect. To grant Marshal Blucher perfect liberty of action and increase his army to double the present number was not objected to by any one. The great difficulty consisted of depriving the jealous and susceptible Bernadotte of two corps that constituted the chief part of the forces under his command. He had already complained and even threatened, because it seemed to him that his services were not rated as highly as they deserved, and he hinted that he might possibly retire to his tent and withdraw his aid. Different causes had concurred to ruffle his temper. Austria continued to protect Denmark against Sweden and had refused to admit a Swedish plenipotentiary to the Châtillon congress. As to this second point, it must not be forgotten that England, Prussia, Russia, and Austria were empowered to treat for the allied estates, great and small, and certainly Prince Bernadotte's personal worth did not confer so much importance on Sweden as to entitle her to be classed as a sixth great power. To these two causes of discontent was added a third, more intense in its action though not so openly avowed. The English minister, often indirectly questioned as to the projects of the coalition with regard to the throne of France, had told the inquisitive Bernadotte flatly that the allied powers were not making war for the purpose of substituting one dynasty for another, that questions of home government did not concern them, that they would allow France to choose for herself should another revolution break out, but that as far as the English were concerned they considered the Bourbon alone fit to replace the Bonaparte dynasty. The new-made Swede, who would willingly have again become French, to

obtain the throne of France, displayed from the time of this explanation, extreme ill-humour at the slightest contradiction. The Allies certainly did not fear him, still a disturbance of any kind in the affairs of the coalition, whilst all their forces were engaged against Napoleon, would be of some importance, and they feared to get into difficulties by depriving Bernadotte of the most considerable portion of his army.

The Allies were only stopped by this apprehension, and Alexander, notwithstanding his desire to satisfy the hot-tempered Blucher, hesitated, as well as the other members of the council, when Lord Castlereagh rising suddenly and acting as a Providence that determines everything, asked the military men whether they really considered the addition of Bulow and Wintzingerode's corps necessary to the army of Silesia. Having received a reply in the affirmative, he declared that he would take upon himself to smooth away all difficulties with the Prince Royal of Sweden. This declaration put an end to all hesitation, and it was decided that Blucher should receive the addition of Bulow and Wintzingerode's corps, with permission to manœuvre between the Seine and the Marne, in whatever way he believed most advantageous to the general interests of the war. Alexander dismissed Blucher's emissaries filled with joy, and it must be said, in relating to them what had taken place, he very much exaggerated what the advocates of active measures owed to him on this occasion.

But what means did Lord Castlereagh possess of arranging everything by his own authority? We shall explain this in a few words. In the first place, his mind was clear-sighted and firm, he was consequently able to seize at once, the essential points of an argument. In the next place he held in his hands the power that springs from money, and in the present instance, this was a very great power, considering that Sweden was not rich enough to pay her army. To have or not to have twenty-five millions, was the same for Bernadotte, as having or not having a Swedish army. Besides, Sweden, surrounded on every side by the English navy, durst not venture one false step. And lastly, Lord Castlereagh possessed the means of soothing the Prince of Sweden's pride. A German corps, drawn from the different principalities lately separated from France, had been embodied in Hanover, and paid by England. This corps amounted to 25,000 men, commanded by General Walmoden. There were 7 or 8,000 English in Holland under General Graham. The Prince of Orange was busy recruiting the Dutch army, and had already assembled from 10,000 to 12,000 men, who were also to receive their pay out of British subsidies. Lord Castlereagh need only say a word, and all these troops passed under the command of such or such a general. He decided they should be placed under the orders of the Prince of Sweden, who would then combine under his authority, besides Swedes and Danes, who had been forced to give in their submission, Germans, English, and Dutch, including the Prince of

Orange. The command of such a variety of troops would give him in the North, the appearance of a king of kings, which ought to satisfy his pride, and indemnify him for the troops of which he was deprived.

Bernadotte was made acquainted with these arrangements, and an order immediately despatched to the corps of Bulow and Wintzingerode to place themselves under the command of Marshal Blucher.

Lord Castlereagh profitted of what had occurred to render the coalition a fresh service, not less important than the preceding.

The want of union amongst the Allies was deeply felt, and it was feared every moment that the present coalition might dissolve, like all those which during the last twenty years had fallen beneath the sword of Napoleon. The bare thought of such an event was alarming, for if the Allies committed the error of breaking up the coalition, the tyrant of Europe, as they called the Emperor of the French, would again become as powerful, and more malignant than ever, and would not fail to trample on his present opponents. This well-founded fear obtained in the highest degree in the allied camp, and yet did not prevent disagreeable remarks, ill offices, and violent private quarrels. The late letters from Napoleon to the Emperor Francis and Prince Schwarzenberg, which the Austrian cabinet had too much tact to conceal, had increased the general feeling of apprehension, and though the fidelity of Austria did not appear to be shaken, still it was desirable that the bonds of the coalition should be drawn closer, in order to convince Napoleon that neither his profound cunning nor his formidable sword could sever the ties that bound his enemies together.

Lord Castlereagh was now revolving in his mind some striking measure by which the union of the allied powers might be more firmly cemented. Happily, an opportunity, the natural result of circumstances, soon presented itself. This was the conclusion of the new financial arrangements, which the three powers had incessantly solicited, since it had been decided that the war should be carried beyond the Rhine, and it was on this account Count Pozzo had been sent to London. These fresh arrangements offered an opportunity of binding the Allies more closely together than anything that had yet occurred, for they could now stipulate with what intentions, for what length of time, and in what proportion, each should contribute to the common cause, and they should also consider what kind of alliance should be formed to secure, after the great struggle should be terminated, the results that had been obtained. It was in accordance with these views, that Lord Castlereagh projected, and ordered to be drawn up, a new treaty, that he resolved to offer for signature to the allied courts. This treaty, besides the general object of cementing the union of the allied powers, had a particular object, exclusively English; that of increasing Great Britain's continental importance, and so securing her the means of carrying out certain views which she had very much at heart.

Lord Castlereagh consequently devised a solemn alliance between England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, by which each of these powers was pledged to furnish a permanent contingent of 150,000 men, until the present war should be terminated in a manner conformable to their wishes. The 600,000 men that this combination would place at the disposal of the coalition, did not include the levies to be supplied by the secondary powers, and which, united to the others, would furnish a total of 800,000 men. England, not being able to contribute 150,000 men from her own troops, undertook to subsidize foreign soldiers. She had 100,000 men in Spain, including English, Portuguese and Spaniards, and it would be easy for her, with Hanoverians, Germans of different states, and Dutch, to raise a new contingent of 50,000 men.

Great Britain would thus acquire, independent of her maritime importance, a continental influence almost equal to that enjoyed by the three continental powers. To this she was able to add an influence peculiar to herself, that of money, and Lord Castlereagh took upon himself to offer an annual subsidy of six millions sterling, to be paid during the entire duration of the war; and this money was to be equally divided between Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Thus England contributed a double aid to the common undertaking; a triple aid, indeed, if we take her navy into account, and the assistance she rendered ought naturally to give her a decisive authority over the other powers, and be a pledge that the conditions of the future peace should be based on her wishes.

It was further stipulated that the Allies should promise not to listen to any private proposition, but to treat in common with the common enemy, according to the accepted conditions. Lord Castlereagh, wishing, moreover, to provide for the future, and to bind the Allies to the work they should have accomplished, conceived the project of maintaining the coalition for twenty years after the conclusion of the approaching peace. Each of the Allies should be bound, after the close of the war, to keep on foot 60,000 men, making a total of 240,000, for the service of whichever of the allies France might attack, if, after the conclusion of the peace, she renewed her aggressions against her neighbours. This was a means of guaranteeing the existence of two kingdoms, whose creation England earnestly desired; that of the Low Countries, because it deprived us of Antwerp, and that of Piedmont because it robbed us of Genoa.

There was an idea that began to find favour amongst the diplomatists of the coalition; it was, not only to grant possessions on the left of the Rhine to the House of Orange, but also to grant some to Prussia, in order to establish an unceasing source of jealousy between that power and France. This idea had originated with Mr. Pitt, in 1805, and was adopted by Lord Castlereagh, as it seemed an important means of strengthening the new kingdom, that was to be created by the union of Belgium and Holland. This projected arrangement, which was advantageous to Prussia, though

it compromised her with us, was not likely to meet any opposition; for to overthrow France, and bind her in iron fetters after having overthrown her, was at that time the wish, the hope, the joy of all Europe. But these events also furnished each of the sovereigns an opportunity of gratifying his private interests. Thus, for example, Russia demanded as a recompense for the arrangements to which she lent her aid, that Holland should give her a full receipt for the loans contracted at Amsterdam. England, as we have already seen, in order to complete her work, wished to marry the Princess Charlotte, heiress to the British crown, to the son of the Prince of Orange, and thus unite, in some sort, under the same sceptre, the three kingdoms of the British Empire, and the new monarchy of the Low Countries.

In burdening England with enormous expenses, the new treaty afforded her such great advantages, that the bold-minded minister had not hesitated to propose the conditions, and insisted on their acceptance as a point which he would not yield. Consequently, Lord Castlereagh presented the project to the allied powers, in conjunction with whom he governed Europe.

The proclamation of a new alliance that was to exist during the entire duration of the war, and be valid for twenty years after the conclusion of peace, in order to maintain the new European edifice about to be created, ought to be agreeable to all the contracting powers! for, even after the conclusion of peace, they might still fear ulterior enterprises on the part of France. The propositions of Lord Castlereagh were, therefore, accepted and signed at Chaumont, on the 1st of March. This was the famous treaty of Chaumont, which was the bases of the Holy Alliance, and which, during nearly forty years, influenced European policy, until Europe at length perceived it was not by France alone that the balance of power might be disturbed.

This treaty was signed amid the universal joy of the Allies, who were all well pleased at being closely united and largely subsidized, with the exception of Austria, who, whilst she saw in the new alliance tranquillizing assurances against the projects of France in Italy, did not find there any guarantee against the enterprises of Russia in Poland and the East. Lord Castlereagh did not stop here in his labours. He proposed and carried the resolution of persevering some time longer, but the period was to be limited, in negotiating at Châtillon. Peace had been offered to Napoleon on condition that France should retire within her ancient limits, and to be consistent with themselves, they ought, if he were willing to treat with him. Besides the stipulations of Chaumont, by giving to the coalition a duration of twenty years, was sufficiently reassuring against any attempts he might make for the recovery of his ancient conquests. But if he prolonged the negotiations with the evident intention of occupying the time of the Allies, and trifling with them, they would fix a term, after which the negotiations should be broken off, and a definite resolution taken of treating with him no longer,

which would be equivalent to an European declaration of his dethronement. But until that time arrived, no measures opposed to his dynasty could be sanctioned, and the Count d'Artois, in Franche-Comté, and the Duke d'Angoulême, in Guyenne, were not to be received at the head-quarters of the belligerent powers.

These measures were, with regard to the interests of the Allies, so wisely planned, that they received a prompt and universal assent. It was by these measures that Lord Castlereagh established his personal influence, and, above all, the influence of his country in the European coalition. He wrote to his cabinet, that carrying out these projects would, no doubt, cost England a great deal, but he was sure of their being generally approved, for the question at issue had been either to seize or to lose the first place amongst the European powers, and he had not hesitated to secure that position, whatever it might cost the British treasury. He certainly had no cause to fear the rejection of his project, whatever might be the number of promised millions. England has always been made to pay for her greatness, and has rarely erred in the estimate of her worth.

As soon as these matters were determined, an order was despatched to the plenipotentiaries of the four cabinets, directing them to inform M. de Caulaincourt that they awaited a reply on the part of France; that if the proposed preliminaries were not approved, France might send others, which should be discussed in a spirit of conciliation, provided they did not deviate too widely from the principles laid down; but, after a certain period had elapsed, the congress of Châtillon should be dissolved, and all further negotiation abandoned.

No sooner had Blucher and his advisers, Gneisenau, Muffling, and others, learned the resolution adopted by the Allies of allowing them freedom of action, and reinforcing them with 50,000 men, than they again indulged the ambition which had already proved so fatal to them, that of being the first to enter Paris. They scarcely paused to examine whether, before they undertook this new offensive movement, it would be better to wait the junction of the 50,000 men destined for their support, and they immediately resolved to advance to the right, though in a slightly oblique direction—that is to say, towards the Marne—where they could more promptly rejoin Bulow and Wintzingerode, who had already set out, the one towards Soissons, the other towards Reims. In their feverish impatience, they preferred joining these troops on the way, whatever danger might result from their isolated march, than to await their arrival in the vicinity of Prince Schwarzenberg, where the armies of Silesia and Bohemia might afford each other mutual assistance. They said to themselves, and with truth, that by this movement they would draw Napoleon towards them, and free Prince Schwarzenberg, but they did not add, that it was at the risk of involving themselves in imminent danger that they could free him from the enemy. Moreover, having seen some light troops galloping on their flank, they

hoped in advancing towards the Marne to encounter Marshals Marmont and Mortier, apart from Napoleon, and thus find an opportunity of revenging themselves for their recent defeats. What they did not take into consideration was, that the movements of the French army were very differently calculated from that of the Allies, and were not so much exposed to the chances of war.

However this may be, on the 24th February Blucher, who had advanced as far as Méry, recrossed the Aube at Anglure, and advanced to Sézanne. Perceiving, though not very clearly, the perils of this march, he sent word to Prince Schwarzenberg that in order to free him from his enemies he was about to expose himself to great danger, and begged him earnestly, as soon as he should be freed from the presence of Napoleon, to advance, in order to render to the army of Silesia the same service that the latter was about to render to the army of Bohemia.

We have already seen what was the position of the Marshals Mortier and Marmont, whilst Napoleon was returning from the Marne to the Seine, to fight the battles of Nangis and Montereau. Marshal Mortier, who had been ordered to follow in the rear of d'York and Sacken towards Soissons, had not been able to overtake these two generals, who, by making a movement to the right, had escaped to Châlons; but Mortier retook Soissons, which had momentarily fallen into the enemy's possession. In pursuance of Napoleon's orders, which recalled him to the Marne, he had fallen back on Château-Thierry, and arrived there the very day that Blucher commenced the execution of his new projects. As to Marshal Marmont, placed between Etoges and Montmirail, so as to be in communication, on one side with Marshal Mortier on the Marne, and on the other with Napoleon on the Aube, he had successively occupied Etoges, Montmirail, and Sézanne. Having seen Blucher cross the Aube at Anglure on the 24th, and return to Sézanne on the 25th, he had retired in good order on Esternay, behind the Grand-Morin, after having killed some of the enemy, without losing a man himself. His plan of action was now clearly laid down; it was, on seeing himself separated from Napoleon by Blucher's late movement, to fall back on the Marne, and there join Marshal Mortier, and dispute the country inch by inch with the enemy, until Napoleon should arrive to their assistance. He had sent word to Mortier, who was then at Château-Thierry, to proceed towards Ferté-sous-Jouarre, whither he would advance from another direction; he also informed Napoleon of what had taken place, praying him to come up as soon as possible.

On the morning of the 26th, Blucher having recommenced his pursuit, Marmont continued his retrograde movement as far as Ferté-Gaucher, then turning towards the Marne, he took the road to Ferté-sous-Jouarre. Blucher continued the pursuit of the previous evening without overtaking Mortier, and, when he saw him take the direction of Ferté-sous-Jouarre, instead of going towards Meaux, strong doubts sprang up in his mind. He did not

comprehend that Marmont going to Ferté-sous-Jouarre in preference to Meaux, must have had serious reasons for a movement that removed him still further from Paris, and that these reasons could be no other than the desire of joining Mortier as soon as possible; neither did he perceive that, allowing the two Marshals the advantage of uniting their forces—an advantage which he could not contest with them—he ought to have thought of cutting them off from Paris, and for that purpose hastened himself to Meaux. This very natural thought did not occur to Blucher, and though he arrived at Jouarre at a very early hour, and might have had possession of Meaux before night, he lost the evening in trying to discover what he could not divine, under the pretext so often alleged by generals who do not know the value of time, of granting necessary repose to his troops.

On the next day—the 27th February—having at length comprehended that the two Marshals, having combined their forces at Ferté-sous-Jouarre, must be naturally solicitous to reach Meaux, the direct route to Paris, he ordered Sacken to advance from the left on Meaux, and sent Kleist straight forward on Sammeron, to cross the Marne at that point, by means of a portable bridge that he brought with him. Besides being desirous of intercepting the route to Paris, on both banks of the Marne, he also wished to cross that river with the main body of his forces, and take up a stronger position on the other side, in case Napoleon, as was very probable, should leave the army of Bohemia and come in pursuit of that of Silesia.

But the two French Marshals were more alert than Blucher, and, whilst on the morning of the 27th, he had scarcely fixed his plans, they were at that very moment marching towards Meaux, for the purpose of resuming communications with Paris, which the urgent necessity of effecting an union between their forces had obliged them to suspend for a while. Blucher did not estimate their combined forces, taking into account their labours and losses, at more than 14,000 men, excellent soldiers no doubt, but a small number to cut their way through 50,000 enemies, whom they might encounter on the route to Meaux. Happily they took measures to protect their movements, with as much skill as promptitude.

The Marne, between Ferté-sous-Jouarre and Meaux, describes numerous windings, whose edges are bordered by the Paris route, like a tangent touching successively several circles. At Trilport the road touches one of these contours, crosses the Marne and leads to Meaux. The two Marshals set out before daybreak, in order to reach the bridge of Trilport, take possession of it, cross the Marne and seize on Meaux. Moreover, wishing also to take possession of the Paris route that runs along the right bank of the Marne, they had ordered General Vincent to cross to this bank by the bridge of Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and take up a position behind the Ourcq, which in the neighbourhood of Lizy approaches the Marne very closely, without, however, uniting with that river, and forms with it an

almost continuous line of defence. Thus established behind the Marne and the Ourcq, with their right at Meaux and their left at Lizy, they might keep the enemy in check during three or four days, receive, meanwhile, reinforcements from Paris, and await, without incurring any great risk, the arrival of Napoleon, who would not fail to fly to their assistance as soon as he should have learned their position.

These excellent arrangements were as skilfully executed as conceived. On the morning of the 27th, before Blucher could discern their movements, the two Marshals glided, so to speak, between the enemy and the Marne, along the road that runs on the left bank, tangent to the different windings of this river, crossed the bridge at Trilport, leaving the Ricard division to defend the bridge, and advanced to Meaux. Whilst Marshal Marmont, after crossing the Marne, arrived at Meaux by the right bank of the river, General Sacken arrived there by the left. Some Russian detachments had already entered the city at the south side, when the Marshal charged them at the head of 200 men, drove them back and shut the gates. Meanwhile, General Vincent had crossed the Marne at Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and taken up his position at Lizy, behind the Ourcq.

The two Marshals had thus succeeded, with 14,000 men, in evading 50,000, and Blucher, who ought to have captured both the one and the other, experienced the confusion of seeing them established safe and sound behind the Marne and the Ourcq; whilst the position of affairs, lately so perilous for them, was now about to become so for him. This movement being completed on the 27th February, the Marshals sent Napoleon an account of what they had done; they also sent to Joseph, demanding all the reinforcements he could possibly spare from Paris. In fact, the question now was, to save the capital; and the resources Paris contained could not be more usefully employed than in being sent immediately to Meaux.

Napoleon, informed on the 25th, of Blucher's movement towards the Marne, and knowing the presumptuous character of this General, was fully prepared for the imprudence he was about to commit, and resolved to make him pay dearly for his rashness.* Without losing

* The Duke de Ragusa, as usual, ignorant of Napoleon's motives, and judging his conduct very superficially, reproaches him for not having set out on the 27th, and makes it appear that he received intelligence of Blucher's movement on the 24th, and asserts that had he made a movement two days earlier, the destruction of the army of Silesia would have been inevitable. The correspondence gives a decisive reply to this reproach. Intelligence of Blucher's movement, which was sent to Sézanne on the 24th, did not reach Napoleon till the 25th, and on that very day he despatched Victor from Méry to Plancy, and Ney from Troyes to Aubeterre. Consequently there was not an hour lost. On the 26th, when Blucher's intention was fully evident, Napoleon continued this movement, but did not set out himself until the 27th, in order to give his troops time to advance. The news arrived on the 25th, and, on the 27th, his troops had reached Herbisse, beyond the Aube. It would, therefore, have been impossible to act with more rapidity, and when we consider what steadiness of judgment and vigour of character are needed to form instant resolutions during actual warfare, especially in a position so serious as that of Napoleon, a position where the first false movement

a moment, he ordered Marshal Victor, who was stationed between Troyes and Méry, to reconstruct the bridge of Méry on the Seine, and to advance to Plancy and cross the Aube at that point. He ordered Marshal Ney to march to Aubeterre, and cross the Aube at Arcis. His intention was to leave Troyes privately, with 34,000 or 35,000 men, leaving about the same number before that city, throw himself on Blucher's rear, and force him back on the Marne, where the Marshals Marmont and Mortier would receive him at the point of the bayonet.

On the morning of the 26th, the former intelligence being confirmed, he despatched the remainder of the guard from Troyes, and resolved to set out next day himself, to direct this new movement, which, if it succeeded, might put an end to the war.

In adopting this resolution, it would be necessary to leave before Troyes, a force sufficient to awe Prince Schwarzenberg. Napoleon confided to the Marshals Oudinot and Macdonald, and to General Gérard, the task of defending the Aube, concealing, at the same time, his absence as long as possible. Marshal Oudinot had, besides the Rothenbourg division of the Young Guard, the Leval division brought from Spain, half of the Boyer division, also brought from Spain, and Count de Valmy's cavalry; Marshal Macdonald had the 11th corps with Milhaud's cavalry; General Gérard had the 2nd corps, recruited with the Paris reserve and the Saint-Germain cuirassiers. The entire amounted to little more than 30,000 men. Napoleon ordered them to overthrow all the enemy's posts beyond Aube, and to occupy the course of this river strongly, both above and below Bar-sur-Aube. He particularly recommended that after his departure, the soldiers should frequently shout *Vive l'Empereur*, in order that his absence might not be suspected.

He brought with him Marshal Victor, commanding the Boyer and Charpentier divisions of the Young Guard, Ney with the Meunier and Curial divisions of the Young Guard, and the 2nd brigade of the Boyer division, from Spain. Friant with the Old Guard, Drouot with the artillery reserve, and, lastly, from 9,000 to 10,000 cavalry, belonging either to the guards or the dragoons of Spain; the entire amounting, as we have just said, to 35,000 men. By a union with the two marshals the total would be raised to 50,000.

Before leaving Troyes, Napoleon took, according to his custom, diverse measures, relative to military and political administration. The conscription, instead of the decreed 600,000 men, had only yielded 120,000 and, for some time past, furnished none. The people profitted by the shocks the Imperial authority had received, to disobey a law that was universally detested. Instead of from four to five

might have caused his ruin, we cannot sufficiently admire the precision and vigour of conduct of a captain, who, in an hour after having received intelligence, puts his troops *en marche*, and remains behind only to hide his projects longer from the enemy, and to give, whilst his troops are marching forward, orders, that embrace all the armies and the government of a vast empire.

thousand conscripts that hitherto had arrived daily at Paris, and that were drafted hastily into the skeleton regiments of the guard or the line, there did not now arrive a thousand. But it was quite different in the departments traversed by the enemy; there, a patriotic fury raged, and numbers of young men were willing to enlist. Napoleon ordered a sort of levy *en masse* in the invaded provinces, under pretext of calling out, in these departments, the National Guards for the defence of the country, but not wishing to leave these men in the regiments of the National Guards, on which he set no great value, he ordered them to be drafted into the regiments of the line, with a promise of liberation as soon as the enemy should be driven beyond the frontier. He reiterated pressing entreaties that provisions should be sent to Nogent, by the Seine, and, besides, a pontoon train, without which all his movements would be as difficult as though he were in an enemy's country. To these orders he added an injunction, often addressed to his wife, his brother Joseph, the high-chancellor, Cambacérès, and the war minister, not to be afraid, at least not to allow their fear to appear; to execute his instructions promptly and punctually, and then, as he was in the habit of saying, *to leave the rest to him,* promising, if they seconded his efforts, that he would soon drive the Allies into the Rhine.

The commissioners appointed to negotiate the armistice, and who had been assembled since the 24th, at Lusigny, had not ceased to discuss the limits that should separate the belligerent armies. Napoleon, on setting out, had enjoined M. de Flahaut to continue the negotiations, and even to yield different points, provided the fortress of Antwerp and the city of Chambéry were included in the line of demarcation. Though he did not expect any beneficial result from these discussions, yet he did not wish to close any way that led to negotiation. M. de Caulaincourt still advised him to give up a part of the Frankfort bases, and asked him for a counter-proposition, which the plenipotentiaries at Châtillon earnestly demanded, conformably to the orders sent from Chaumont. Napoleon dictated a reply for these plenipotentiaries. M. de Caulaincourt was to say that the desired counter-propositions were being drawn up at headquarters, but that, amidst so many multiplied military movements, it was not astonishing that the Emperor of the French, who was at the same time the head of the government and the head of the army, had not found time to complete such a work. He was, meanwhile, to declare, that the project presented at Châtillon being, not a treaty of peace, but a capitulation, it would never be accepted; that France ought, even for the common good, preserve her ancient position in Europe, and in order to do so, she ought to receive an equivalent for the extension of territory acquired by Prussia, Russia, and Austria, at the expense of Poland, by Germany at the expense of the Ecclesiastical States, by Austria at the expense of Venice, and by England at the expense of the Dutch, and of the Indian princes; that, consequently, France ought to expand herself far beyond the limits of 1790; and that, moreover, she would never

consent that the fate of the states she gave up should be decided without her sanction. In this way Napoleon hinted upon what bases he intended to negotiate, but without declaring explicitly what frontier line he wished to keep, which he was not disposed to do until he should have achieved new and decisive victories. He counselled the Duke of Vicence to propagate the belief that he was still at Troyes, busy in concentrating his resources there, and drawing up a treaty in reply to that of Châtillon. He also wished that the Council of Regency should examine the Châtillon propositions, and give an opinion on them. He flattered himself that all the members of the council would be unanimous in expressing their indignation.

Having despatched these various and serious affairs, Napoleon left Troyes secretly, on the morning of the 27th February, crossed the Aube at Arcis, and, following his columns closely, passed the night at Herbisse, at the house of a poor country priest, who could offer no other accommodation than what his humble vicarage afforded, but which he offered cordially, not alone to the Emperor, but to his numerous staff. After a frugal and cheerful repast, they passed the night on chairs, tables, or on straw, calculating that the present movement in Blucher's rear would be as profitable as the former. Everything promised a similar result, and Napoleon might, without presumption, reckon upon it.

The next day, the 28th February, he continued his march. He could choose between two courses, either to follow Blucher through Sézanne and Ferté-sous-Jouarre to Meaux, or to advance directly through Fère-Champenoise to Château-Thierry. By taking this latter direction he secured the advantage of intercepting Blucher's most important communication, for he could cut him off at the same time from Châlons and Soissons, and separate him from Bulow and Wintzingerode. But there was more than one danger involved in this plan of operation; it would leave the Marshals Marmont and Mortier too long contending with Blucher before Meaux, it would abandon to the latter the principal route to Paris, and, in short, furnish him a line of retreat, far better than that of Châlons or Soissons—we mean the route from Meaux to Provins, which would allow him to fall back, in case of danger, on Prince Schwarzenberg. To pursue Blucher by Sézanne, Ferté-Gaucher and Ferté-sous-Jouarre, was therefore the safest proceeding, whether for the pupose of cutting him off from the high road to Paris, or coming more quickly to the succour of the two marshals; in short, to inflict on him a punishment similar to that he had received at Montmirail and Champaubert; for, if Blucher made an effort to join Prince de Schwarzenberg on the Seine, Napoleon would anticipate him there. If he threw himself behind the Marne, to take a covered position there, he would be followed and hemmed in between the Marne and the Aisne, without any means of escape, precautions having been taken to defend Soissons. Thus Napoleon, in executing a bold manœuvre, chose at the same time the safest course, for he pos-

sessed the rare talent of not overstepping the line that separates daring courage from imprudence—in a word, he could be at the same time rash and cautious. Unhappily, it was only in war he combined these two antagonistic qualities.

He marched, therefore, on the morning of the 28th, with his 35,000 men, through Sézanne, on Ferté-Gaucher and Ferté-sous-Jouarre. Notwithstanding the rapidity of his movements, he was not able to reach Ferté-Gaucher that day, and passed the night between Sézanne and Ferté-Gaucher. The next day (the 1st of March) he slept at Jouarre, and reached Ferté-sous-Jouarre at an early hour on the 2nd. During Napoleon's march on the Marne, Blucher, who at length perceived the danger of his position, had not endeavoured to extricate himself with the celerity that common prudence would have dictated. He had, at first, wished to place the Marne between him and Napoleon, and crossed the river at Ferté-sous-Jouarre, which place had remained in his hands since the retreat of Marmont and Mortier. He destroyed the bridge of this town, and established himself on the Ourcq, to try and force the position of the two Marshals, whilst Napoleon, checked by the Marne, would be obliged to remain a spectator. This was an imprudent calculation, for the Marne could not restrain Napoleon more than thirty-six hours, and, if to carry out these fruitless attempts, Blucher lingered on the banks of the Ourcq, he ran the risk of being attacked in the rear and enclosed between the Marne and the Aisne in a truly perilous position. Things went on in this way; and whilst Napoleon was rapidly advancing, Blucher was losing his time in vain attempts on the line of the Ourcq. He had attempted to transport Kleist's corps across the Ourcq, but Marmont and Mortier, throwing themselves on Kleist, had forced him to repass the river with considerable loss. Whilst the two Marshals thus held their position, Joseph sent them reinforcements consisting of 7,000 foot soldiers, and 1,500 horse, of the Guards and Line. These troops had been incorporated on the 1st of March, and on the 2nd, when it was known that Napoleon had arrived on the Marne, they were ready to receive orders.

Blucher, stationed beyond the Marne, and along the Ourcq, which he had not been able to force, found himself between the two marshals who defended the Ourcq, and Napoleon, who was preparing to cross the Marne. He had excellent reasons to expedite his movements, for the danger was every moment increasing. Nevertheless he persevered in his former plan, and lost the entire 2nd of March lingering along the line of the Ourcq, to try whether he could not fight the two marshals before the eyes of Napoleon, who could not cross the Marne. Having encountered a valiant resistance on every point of the Ourcq, he resolved to decamp on the morning of the 3rd, in order to draw nearer the Aisne, and join either Bulow, who was coming by Soissons, or Wintzingerode, who was coming by Reims. But he should now find himself between the Marne, that Napoleon was about to cross, and the

Aisne, where the only bridge within his reach was that of Soissons, of which we were masters; besides the country between the Marne and the Aisne, which he was about to traverse, was marshy and become almost impracticable in consequence of a sudden thaw. His position was consequently most alarming, thanks to his own imprudence and the profound calculations of his adversary.

During these proceedings, Napoleon having arrived at the banks of the Marne, was burning with impatience to cross. To effect this object he employed the marines of the Guard, and such was their activity that the bridge was reconstructed during the night of the 2nd-3rd of March. The intelligence that arrived every moment was calculated to excite his impatience to the highest degree. The peasants who came from the other side of the Marne were glowing with patriotism, like all who had caught a sight of the enemy, and drew a dreary picture of the state of the Prussian army. In fact this army, filled with recollections of Montmirail, of Château-Thierry, of Vauchamps, and knowing that they were pursued by Napoleon, expected a terrible disaster. The state of the broken-up roads added to their alarm, and they foresaw that they should be obliged to abandon at least their cannon and baggage as soon as Napoleon should have crossed the slender barrier that separated him from them. All this was an inducement to the Emperor not to lose time, and, according to his wont, he did not lose it. Intelligence from Troyes was also another motive for expediting his movements. He learned that Prince Schwarzenberg having discovered the secret of his departure, had resumed offensive operations, and was again driving forward on Troyes and Nogent the marshals who had been left to guard the Aube. This circumstance, though it rendered despatch on his part imperative, troubled him little, for he felt confident that after discomfiting the army of Silesia, he would be able to fall back on the army of Bohemia, and make it retreat faster than it had advanced. Suddenly, at sight of the complicated movements of his adversary, Napoleon conceived a great military idea, whose execution might involve the most important results. To fall immediately on Schwarzenberg, after beating Blucher, appeared to him a fatiguing movement that might not yield any decisive result. He devised another plan of operation. The intelligence he had received that Bulow and Wintzingerode's corps had arrived in line, proved to him that the Allies were strangely neglecting the blockade of the fortresses, and left them invested by forces as contemptible in number as in quality; it would therefore be possible to make use of the garrisons against the enemy, as they had made use of the blockading troops against us; he could thus turn to profit what, in his highly expressive language, he called "the dead forces." He consequently resolved to call out all the disposable troops in the fortresses, and form them into an active army, from which important services might be expected. Into the fortresses of Belgium, Luxembourg, Lorraine, and Alsace, conscripts had been thrown who, drafted into the skele-

tons of old regiments, must have acquired a certain amount of military instruction during the two months and a half that the campaign had lasted. Having lately often led to battle conscripts who had been only fifteen days under drill, Napoleon might consider men who had been two months and a half enlisted, disciplined soldiers. Admitting these premises, it would be possible to draw from Lille, Antwerp, Ostend, Gorcum, and Berg-op-Zoom, about 20,000 men, or at least 15,000. Double that number might be drawn from the fortresses of Luxembourg, Metz, Verdun, Thionville, Mayence, Strasbourg, &c. If then, after overthrowing Blucher, Napoleon, who had about 50,000 men, could add to these 50,000 more, in advancing by Soissons, Laon, and Rethel on Verdun and Nancy, he would find himself at the head of 100,000 men in the rear of Prince Schwarzenberg, and without doubt the latter would not wait that opportunity to return from Paris to Besançon. At the first suspicion of such a project, the commander-in-chief would retrace his steps, pursued by the exasperated peasantry of Burgundy, Champagne, and Lorraine, who, utterly cast down at first by the rapidity of the invasion, had afterwards exhibited sentiments of the purest patriotism. Schwarzenberg would thus arrive half vanquished, to fall hopelessly beneath Napoleon's sword. This daring project was certainly executable, for the men on whom he calculated existed, and the journey to collect them did not involve an expenditure of much labour or time. In fact, the distance from Soissons to Rethel, from Rethel to Verdun, from Verdun to Toul, was not greater than the army had already traversed in crossing alternately from Schwarzenberg to Blucher. Besides, two or three days more were of little consequence, when the bare announcement of the projected movement would have the effect of drawing the enemy from Paris to the frontiers, and freeing the capital. Thus the war might be terminated at once, if fortune favoured the execution of the plan, for certainly Prince Schwarzenberg—whose numbers were already reduced to 90,000 men, by the loss of the detachment sent to Laon—pursued by the peasantry of the provinces, could not resist an army of 100,000 men, commanded by the Emperor in person.

Napoleon, therefore, ordered General Maison to leave at Antwerp only a few seamen, the National Guards, and the forces absolutely necessary to resist an enemy, who did not think of making a regular attack; he was to do the same in all the fortresses in Flanders, and prepare to march on Mezières with what troops he could assemble. He gave similar orders to the governors of Mayence, Metz, and Strasbourg. All were ordered to leave in the fortresses only those troops that were indispensably necessary, and supply the deficiency by the National Guards; they were to summon the garrisons from the least important villages, and advance from Mayence and Strasbourg to Metz, from Metz to Nancy, to join the main body. The small numbers that blockaded our fortresses could not prevent these combinations, if the commanders of the

garrisons acted with vigour. In any case, Napoleon coming to their aid would free those who might have encountered any serious obstacle. Trustworthy men were sent in disguise to carry these orders, which it was not difficult to dispatch to their destination, for with the exception of Mayence we had intelligence from all our fortresses; so complete was the blockade.

Full of this project, on which he founded most rationable hopes, Napoleon, after crossing the Marne on the night of the 2nd-3rd March, set out in pursuit of Blucher, whom it was necessary he should put *hors de combat*, or at least remove to a distance, in order to execute the plan he had just conceived. The reports of the morning all agreed in representing Blucher in the deepest embarrassment. In fact he was driven back on the Aisne, which he could only cross at the bridge of Soissons, that belonged to us. He could certainly escape by a movement to the right that would bring him towards Fère-en-Tardenois, and towards Reims, a movement that would afford him an opportunity of escape by remounting the Aisne, and crossing nearer the source, where there was a sufficiency of bridges, and where he would meet Bulow and Wintzingerode. But Napoleon was not a man to leave this resource to his adversary. For this purpose, after crossing the Marne, he remounted the river towards the source, by the high road that leads from Ferté-sous-Jouarre to Château-Thierry. He had thus the double advantage of advancing faster, and of reaching the direct road from Château-Thierry to Soissons, by Oulchy. Once on this road he would outflank Blucher, and he was certain of taking possession of the only road open to the Prussian General, that of Reims.

Having arrived at Château-Thierry Napoleon ceased to advance to the right, and marching directly on Soissons, he drove Blucher briskly back on Oulchy. At the same moment the Marshals Mortier and Marmont having recrossed the Ourcq on our left, and debouched from Lizy and from May, set out in pursuit of the enemy. A sudden frost that occurred on the morning of the 3rd, rendered Blucher's retreat less difficult. His danger, however, was not less great, for the road to Reims was about being closed against him. At Oulchy the Ourcq again makes its appearance, and Marmont had a sharp engagement at that place with Blucher's rear-guard. He took or killed about three thousand of this rear-guard, and forced the remainder to cross the Ourcq in disorder. The passage was thus assured on the morning of the next day for the Marshals Mortier and Marmont, who were advancing at the head of their combined troops. Another advantage was also obtained, it was that of occupying Fère-en-Tardenois with our extreme right, and cutting off the route to Reims. There remained to Blucher no other way of crossing the Aisne than at Soissons, of which we were masters. We had at length laid hold of our irreconcilable enemy, and were about to suffocate him in a brassy embrace.

Napoleon had brought up his van-guard as far as the village of Rocourt, whilst Marmont's troops were at Oulchy, and he that night

slept at Bezu-Saint-Germain, his mind filled with the highest and best-founded hopes he had ever conceived.

In fact, on the next day—the 4th March—he set out, calculating on a decisive engagement during the day. Still fearing that Blucher might escape on the right, the Emperor himself took up a position at Fismes, the only route leading to Reims that was still practicable, whilst Marmont and Mortier pushed forward on Soissons by Oulchy and Hartennes. Whatever course Blucher took he would be forced to fight, with the Aisne at his back, and with 45,000 against 55,000 men. We had not been accustomed in this campaign to a superiority of numbers on our side, and Blucher would now, inevitably, be thrust into the Aisne. Whether he paused at Soissons and fought there, with the river in his rear, or re-ascended the Aisne, his position would be just the same. If he halted before Soissons, Napoleon, uniting his left with Marmont and Mortier, would fall on him within three or four hours; if he advanced along the Aisne, to reconstruct a bridge there, or make use of that of Berry-au-Bac, Napoleon could fall more directly on him from Fismes, and forming a combination with the two marshals, surprise him by a flank movement, and place him in the most critical position. Blucher's destruction was therefore inevitable, and what was to become of Bulow and Wintzingerode, who were hovering about the vicinity, waiting to join him? What would become of Schwarzenberg, left alone on the Paris route? The destiny of France was about to change, for whatever at a later period might become of the Imperial dynasty (a secondary consideration in the present solemn crisis), victorious France would have preserved her natural frontiers. Every moment brought us fresh presages of victory. The greatest dejection prevailed amongst Blucher's troops, whilst ours were burning for battle. At every step the French fell in with waggons that had been abandoned, or with stragglers from the enemy's line. Eleven or twelve hundred of these unhappy creatures had fallen into our hands.

Suddenly, Napoleon received the most unexpected and afflicting intelligence. Soissons, that was the key to the Aisne— Soissons, that he had taken especial care to provide with sufficient means of defence—Soissons had opened its gates to Blucher, and given up to him the passage of the Aisne. Who was it that had thus suddenly changed the face of things, and converted into a serious danger for us that which, a few hours before, had been an imminent peril for the enemy? Blucher, in fact, had not only escaped our pursuit, and stood protected by the Aisne, which, from having been an advantage for us, was now changed into an obstacle, but had also joined Bulow and Wintzingerode, and so raised the number of his troops to 100,000 men. Who, then, we repeat, had been able to reverse our position and destroy our hopes? A weak-minded man, who, without being either a traitor or a coward, or even a bad officer, had been terrified by the threats of the adverse generals, and had delivered up Soissons. We shall now relate how this event had

occurred, the most fatal in the annals of our history, next to that which, a year later occurred between Wavre and Waterloo.

Soissons had once fallen into the hands of the Allies, in consequence of the death of General Rusca, and had been wrested from them by Marshal Mortier, when the latter had been sent in pursuit of the Generals, Sacken and d'York. In obedience to the orders of Napoleon, who felt all the importance of Soissons, in the present circumstances, Marshal Mortier had provided, by every means in his power, for the preservation of this post. The place, which had long been neglected, was not in a state to offer great resistance to the enemy; but, with artillery and provisions, of which there was no deficiency, and certain sacrifices that circumstances authorized, we could have held the place for a few days, and thus remained masters of the passage of the Aisne. According to written instructions, that Napoleon had revised, and which had been sent to Soissons, the buildings in the suburbs were to be burned, because they impeded the defence; then the bridge of Aisne was to be undermined, so that it might be blown up, should circumstances become desperate—a measure that would, at least, deprive the enemy of the bridge, should the French not be able to hold it. The Poles lately withdrawn from Sedan had been sent to garrison the place, Napoleon not being very well pleased with them at the time. It was true that to their despair at seeing their country devastated, was added the affliction of profound personal misery, and the noble Polish troops of former times were now reduced to 3,000 or 4,000 men, ill-armed and ill-equipped. However, seeing the extreme peril of France, every one amongst them who could hold a sword or a musket had offered to serve. A thousand cavalry soldiers, under General Pac, had joined the Imperial Guard, and a thousand foot soldiers had assembled at Soissons. These were to be reinforced by 2,000 National Guards. The Governor of the town was General Moreau (no relation of the celebrated Moreau), who had not the reputation of being a bad officer. Unfortunately, to him was confided the worst defended part of the town.

On the 2nd and 3rd March, two masses of the enemy's soldiers appeared in sight, the one advancing along the right, the other along the left bank of the Aisne. It was Bulow, who coming from Belgium, advanced towards Soissons along the right bank of the river, and Wintzingerode, who coming from Luxembourg, through Reims, approached by the left bank. Both felt the great importance, both to Blucher and themselves, of the post they were about to attack. In fact, Soissons was the only issue by which Blucher could cross the barrier of the Aisne, and for the others, it was the only means of delivery from an isolation that became every moment more perilous. Should they not succeed in seizing this bridge, they would be obliged to fall back, the one along the right bank of the Aisne, the other along the left, to effect a junction higher up, and leave Blucher alone between the Aisne and Napoleon. Thus, after having on the 2nd March cannonaded the town during the entire

day, without any great result, on the 3rd they used the strongest threats to General Moreau, trying to intimidate him by threatening to put the entire garrison to the sword.

The place could not resist more than two or three days; for attacked by 50,000 men, and garrisoned only by 10,000, with the defences in a bad condition, it would be impossible to resist even for a short time. The 2,000 National Guards, destined to join the Poles, had not arrived; the houses in the suburbs that impeded the defence had not been destroyed; the bridge had not been mined, which was the Governor's fault. These circumstances were all adverse; but the Poles, who were tried soldiers, offered to hold out to the last extremity; besides, the report of cannon was already heard in the direction of the Marne, which indicated the near approach of Napoleon, and proved the importance of the post, a fact, which the earnest efforts of the enemy would alone be sufficient to prove. In ordinary circumstances, to surrender would have been very natural, for the lives of a garrison ought always to be saved when to sacrifice them can be of no avail, but under the circumstances we are now considering, it became a sacred duty to await the attack of the assailants, and perish even to the last man rather than yield. An engineer officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Saint Hillier, pointed out the duty and possibility of resistance, at least during twenty-four hours. Nevertheless, General Moreau, shaken by the threats addressed to the garrison, consented to give up the place on the 3rd March, and only employed one day discussing the conditions. He wished to depart with his artillery. Count Woronzoff, who was present, said in Russian to one of his generals; "let him take his artillery if he wishes, and mine too, and allow us to cross the Aisne." Our enemies were very compliant, and in according to General Moreau a capitulation in appearance the most honourable, they made him consummate an act that nearly cost him his life, that deprived Napoleon of his empire, and France of her glory. On the evening of the 3rd, Bulow and Wintzingerode shook hands on the Aisne, and thus on the 4th, Blucher found a gate open, which ought to have been closed, and received a reinforcement that raised his army to a hundred thousand men, besides being saved in the twinkling of an eye from the consequences of his own faults and the terrible fate Napoleon had prepared for him.

Some historians, apologists of Blucher, have asserted that the danger he incurred was not so great as Napoleon had been pleased to say, for Blucher might have been reinforced at least by Wintzingerode, who, coming from Reims, was on the left bank of the Aisne, and this junction would have raised the Prussian army to 70,000 men against 55,000. In the first place, no numerical force could have remedied Blucher's false position, for, arriving on the 4th at Soissons, when Napoleon was the same day at Fismes, he would have been obliged either to cross the Aisne that lay before him, by help of temporary bridges, or he should have re-ascended the banks of the river, a distance of ten leagues, with the French

army on his flank. The advantage of 70,000 men against 55,000, a numerical difference which, at that time, was not new to us, was nothing in comparison to so false a military position. Besides, it is almost certain that Wintzingerode not being able to effect a junction with Bulow on the 3rd, would have retraced his steps on the 4th, to recross the Aisne twelve or fifteen leagues higher up, that is to say, at Berry-au-Bac. Blucher would, therefore, have found himself during an entire day isolated between Napoleon and the fortified post of Soissons.

The disaster was, therefore, as certain as anything could be in war; and Napoleon, on learning that Soissons had opened its gates to the enemy, was overwhelmed with grief; for the danger that had lately menaced Blucher was now turned against him. Blucher, in fact, was now at the head of 100,000 men, and the Aisne, which lately threatened his destruction, was become his strongest defence. As to us, we should be obliged either to cross the Aisne with 50,000 men in sight of 100,000, which would be an act of great temerity, or return to the Seine, without knowing what to do there; for how could the French army face that of Bohemia without having conquered the army of Silesia. We can easily understand that Napoleon wrote the following letter to the war minister.

"Fismes, 5th March, 1814.

"The enemy was in the greatest embarrassment, and we were hoping to gather on this very day the fruits of some days labour, when the treason, or the stupidity, of the Commander of Soissons, delivered that place to the enemy.

"On the 3rd, at noon, he marched out, with the honours of war, and brought with him four pieces of cannon. Let this wretch be arrested, as well as all the members of his war council; let him be impeached before a military commission, composed of generals, and for God's sake act so that they may be all shot within twenty-four hours on the *Place de Grève*. It is time to make examples. Let the cause of the sentence be fully explained, printed, and distributed in every direction. I am obliged to throw a temporary bridge across the Aisne; this causes me a loss of thirty-six hours and annoys me dreadfully."

And yet Napoleon only knew part of the truth, for he was not aware that Blucher's force now doubled his in number. All he knew was that Blucher had eluded his grasp, and that to overtake he must pursue him beyond the Aisne. The misfortune was already sufficiently great, and of a nature to disconcert any one but himself. If, after such a discomfiture, Napoleon had been embarrassed and had lost a day or two devising new plans, we ought not to be astonished, if we reflect on the conduct of the greater number of commanders.* But it was not so with him. Though the Aisne

* General Koch says, Chapter xiv: "the Emperor, whose plan was disconcerted by so unexpected an event, remained an entire day in uncertainty, and manifested his

was now to Blucher as great an advantage as it had lately been a disadvantage, though he was reinforced in a proportion of which we had no idea, Napoleon did not renounce pursuing him; he wished to fight him hand to hand, for it would be impossible without having beaten Blucher to fall on Schwarzenberg. In fact he would soon find himself trapped between Blucher, who was in close pursuit, and Schwarzenberg, who would have conquered the marshals left to guard the Aube; this would be a fearful and untenable position. It was incumbent on Napoleon, at any risk—should he even be defeated in the attempt, for he was certain of a still greater defeat by not making the effort—it was incumbent, we say, on Napoleon to pursue Blucher beyond the Aisne, and to set out instantly, before the enemy should have thought of rendering the bridges impracticable. Napoleon gave his orders on the morning of the 5th, immediately after receiving the intelligence that grieved him so deeply.

Napoleon had, during the night, sent General Corbineau to Reims, to seize the place—the most important point of communication with the Ardennes—and make himself master of the troops and provisions that Wintzingerode must necessarily have left behind, Wishing to secure the passage of the Aisne, which was the essential object of the moment, Napoleon had ordered General Nansouty, with the cavalry of the Guard, to advance to the Bridge of Berry-au-Bac, built in stone, and over which was the high road from Reims to Laon. He also ordered a detachment of cavalry to advance on Maisy, situate on our left, and throw a temporary bridge across at that point; he, at the same time, ordered Marshal Mortier to repair without delay to Braisne, to prepare other means of crossing the river at Pontarcy. His intention was to have three bridges on the Aisne, that he should not be forced to debouch in sight of Blucher, which might render the operation impossible. Undoubtedly had the vigilance of the enemy equalled his, the French would have found the 100,000 men of the army of Silesia behind the presumed point of passage, and, opposed by such a force, 50,000 men, however brave they might be, could not have crossed the Aisne. But it may safely be said, that by not losing time, however little remains, we shall arrive soon enough to disconcert the precautions of our enemies. Napoleon, who had learned from long experience how great, in general, is the carelessness of commanders, did not despair of finding the Aisne ill-guarded, and of being able to effect the passage without striking a blow.

embarrassment by the divergent and daring nature of the operations he undertook." This is a very excusable error in one who has read neither the orders nor the correspondence of Napoleon. He was certainly very much annoyed, but not disconcerted, as we shall see; and he ordered, without losing an hour, the new arrangements that circumstances required. The cause of General Koch's error is, he supposes, that the reduction of Soissons having taken place on the 3rd, Napoleon must have known it on the 4th, on account of his proximity. But the correspondence proves that he did not know it until the morning of the 5th, because the Generals Mortier and Marmont, did not know it till the evening of the 4th. The orders for the passage of the Aisne were given on the morning of the 5th; there was, therefore, neither hesitation nor loss of time, which, under the circumstances, is certainly a matter of astonishment.

In effect, whilst that on his right, General Corbineau entered Reims and seized 2,000 of Wintzingerode's men, and a quantity of baggage, General Nansouty, with the cavalry of the Guard and the Poles under General Pac, met Wintzingerode's Cossacks in front of the bridge of Berry-au-Bac, charged full gallop, overthrew them, and crossed the bridge close in their rear, spite of some light infantry left to guard it. The rapid conquest of this stone bridge rendered an attempt on the others unnecessary, for the main body of the enemy being still at a distance the French were able to debouch immediately, and Napoleon made every exertion during the nights of the 5th—6th, as well as during the afternoon of the 6th, to make his troops defile by Berry-au-Bac, in order to take up a position on the right bank of the river, before Blucher could oppose his intention. "It is a slight benefit," said Napoleon, on learning this success, "in compensation for a great ill."

It was not a slight benefit, if transported beyond the Aisne, he could gain a victory, but it would be difficult to gain a victory, Blucher having 100,000 of the best of the allied troops, whilst we had only 55,000 men, of which two-thirds were half-clothed, undrilled conscripts, but who participated in the heroic despair of our officers, and fought with unexampled devotedness. But Napoleon was no longer in a position to count his enemies, he was obliged at all risks to fight, for to fall back on Schwarzenberg without having conquered Blucher, would be to induce the latter to pursue him, and thus expose himself to destruction, hemmed in between the two allied generals. As to the project of marching on to the fortresses to draw out the garrisons, it was equally impracticable, before having beaten Blucher, for otherwise the French would have him close on their track, following them everywhere, and that so nearly, that they could not take a step unobserved by this troublesome adversary. To fight was therefore obligatory, no matter how great the number of enemies, or how vast the local difficulties we might have to encounter.

Blucher was very much displeased at Wintzingerode's negligence in guarding the bridge of Berry-au-Bac, but he ought only to have blamed himself, for nothing is done correctly where the Commander-in-Chief does not oversee the work in person. He, however, dissimulated his annoyance. Wintzingerode commanded the Russians, and it was necessary to act cautiously with haughty and susceptible allies; besides, he was still master of a very strong position, easily defended, and from which he intended to resist the threatened approaching attacks of Napoleon.

After passing the Aisne at Berry-au-Bac, following the high road from Reims to Laon, we have on the right, vast tracts slightly undulated, whilst on the left, we skirt the foot of the Craonne heights, then crossing some wooded hillocks, we descend by Festieux into a humid plain, in the midst of which suddenly appears the city of Laon, built on an isolated peak, and surrounded by high and antique walls. The heights of Craonne, which we see to the left, after cross-

ing the bridge of Berry-au-Bac, are only the extremity of a lengthy plateau that borders the Aisne as far as the environs of Soissons, and forms on one side the bank of the Aisne, on the other that of the Lette, a little river, alternately wooded and marshy, running parallel to the Aisne, and communicating by several valleys with the plain of Laon.

It was on this plateau of Craonne, which is several leagues in length, and which juts out like a species of promontory, after we have passed the bridge of Berry-au-Bac, that Blucher had taken up a position with his army and the fifty thousand men that had joined him. Each commander had naturally taken his station according to the direction from which he had advanced. Wintzingerode having come by Reims, had advanced to the heights of Craonne by Berry-au-Bac, whilst Bulow, having journeyed by Fère and Soissons, had marched between Soissons and Laon. Blucher, with Sacken, D'York, Kleist, Langeron, having crossed the Aisne at Soissons, had re-ascended the banks of the river, and found themselves, part on the plateau of Craonne, part on the borders of the Lette, between the Lette and Laon.

On the morning of the 6th, Napoleon, having effected the passage of the Aisne, wished to try the enemy's position, and ordered a brisk attack on the heights of Craonne. The town of Craonne was first carried, but not without great labour and loss of blood. Then Ney and Victor, entering a valley between the abbey of Vauclerc on the left, and the chateau of Bôve on the right, endeavoured to seize the heights where the Lette rises. They attacked the position with the determination to make themselves masters of it. But after losing several hundred men, they perceived the position could only be carried by a serious attack, that is to say, by a regular engagement. Instead of uselessly shedding precious blood, they thought it better to pause, until they should come to a decisive resolution. Ney and Victor encamped at the foot of the heights. The first division of the Old Guard under Mortier took up a position at Corbeny, the cavalry of the Old Guard were stationed at Craonne and in the environs. The second division of the Old Guard passed the night in the rear of Berry-au-Bac, a little on this side of the Aisne, at Cormicy. Marmont was *en-route* for this point, to form the rear-guard of the army, and flank it during the grave operations that were about to be undertaken.

It had become necessary, as we have already said, to fight a battle, however doubtful the result might be, in consequence of the numerical strength and the position of the enemy, for without having conquered Blucher, Napoleon could neither fall back on Schwarzenberg nor seek the garrisons on the frontier. But the plan of battle gave rise to more than one question. To make a direct attack on the plateau of Craonne, which runs to a length of several leagues between the Aisne and the Lette, in order to thrust back the enemy on the Lette, and from the Lette into the plain of Laon, would be to grapple at once with the worst difficulties the case presented; it

would be, as the proverb says, *to take the bull by the horns*. There was a means that seemed less difficult; it was, instead of pausing on the left and giving battle there, to defile to the right, follow the high road from Reims to Laon, by Corbeny and Festieux, and descend into the plain of Laon, where probably, descending *en masse*, we might drive the enemy back on the Laon. But besides that, there was more than one obstacle to surmount on this route, the road to Paris would be by this movement left unprotected, and the enemy, being masters of Soissons, would be able, conquered or victors, to return to the Marne and the Seine, join Schwarzenberg and march on Paris with 200,000 men. Undoubtedly the same thing would happen, did Napoleon, as he intended, advance to the frontiers to call out the garrisons; but he did not think of executing this project, until he should have weakened Blucher by a great defeat, after having seriously shaken the moral strength of the Allies and revived in a proportionate degree the courage of the Parisians and of the army. It would therefore be necessary to attack Blucher in such a way as to keep up a communication, on one hand, with Soissons, and on the other, with Laon, (an important consideration that military critics have not taken into account,) and therefore, there remained but one means, which was to ascend the plateau of Craonne on our left, and to make this—our first success—our first aggressive act against Blucher. Once arrived on the plateau, a road lay before us that leads to Soissons. We could follow this route and by an effort of our right wing, throw our enemy on the Lette, then by a second effort, force them into the plain of Laon, and if we ultimately succeeded in depriving them of Laon, we should have terminated the series of operations against Blucher in the most decisive and desirable manner. Napoleon could certainly have adopted a middle course, as for example, not attempting to carry the plateau of Craonne, not advancing along the route from Reims to Laon, but effecting a passage between both by means of a ravine, that opened into the valley of the Lette, and thus advance in close column into this valley, having on the left, the heights of Craonne, on the right, those of Bôve. But to effect this movement, it would be necessary to pass through a narrow gorge, in the midst of woody and marshy villages, where we should run the risk of seeing the enemy rush upon us from the heights that border the Lette on all sides; we should have needed veteran soldiers, coolly intrepid, to venture into this cut-throat pass.

The carrying of the plateau on the left by a sudden effort, was better suited to our young impetuous troops, supported by two divisions of the Old Guard; and besides, if the position was strong, there was the advantage of having to do only with a wing of the Allies, separated from the remainder of the army by so many obstacles, that succours could not easily be brought up.

Napoleon decided that his left wing should attack the Craonne plateau. On this plateau was stationed the entire infantry of Wintzingerode, at that moment under the command of Count

Woronzoff; the entire of Sacken's corps with the Langeron in reserve, making in all 50,000 men, well provided with artillery. Blucher, judging by the attempts of the previous evening and the direction of our movements, which he could easily discern from the heights he occupied, had divined that we intended to attack the Craonne plateau, and by the advice of M. de Muffling, quarter-master general of the army of Silesia, he had resolved to form nearly the entire of his cavalry into a single mass, make them advance along the high road from Laon to Reims, into the open country, and precipitate them, to the number of twelve or fifteen thousand horse on our right flank and our rear. If he succeeded, he would cut us off from Berry-au-Bac and then throw us into the Aisne. The combination might involve grave consequences for us, but to produce such a result two events must occur; we must fail in our attempt to carry the plateau, and the second division of the Old Guard, as well as Marmont's corps, must be broken by the enemy's cavalry; it was not very probable that either event would take place.

This cavalry expedition was confided to Wintzingerode, who was looked upon amongst the Allies as the most alert of their van-guard officers; and it was on this account he had left his cavalry and light infantry to Count Woronzoff. Almost the entire of the allied cavalry were to advance on the Lette, through the woody country that forms the two banks of this little river, and having crossed the Lette, they were, after making a long detour, to remain *en masse* on the high road from Laon to Reims. Kleist was to support Wintzingerode with his infantry, the d'York cavalry was to watch the two banks of the Lette, Bulow was ordered to guard the Laon, whilst Woronzoff, Sacken, and Langeron were to defend to the last extremity the Craonne plateau,

On the morning of the 7th March Napoleon determined on his plan of attack. We have said that the plateau of Craonne consisted of a succession of flat-topped heights, extending between the Aisne and the Lette, which they separate, and reaching the environs of Soissons. It was the most salient part of this plateau, forming, as we have just seen, a kind of promontory in the midst of the plain of Craonne, that was to be attacked. Had it been necessary to escalade this plateau at one stretch, the task would have been too difficult. There was what might be called a first step; this was the little plateau of Craonne, rising above Craonnelle, a point fortunately occupied by our troops since the previous evening. This first step would serve as a *point de depart*, by which we could ascend more easily to the main plateau. In order to render the operation less destructive, Napoleon resolved to second it by two flank attacks—a movement favoured by the nature of the ground. Two ravines descended from the plateau; one, that of Oulches, situated on our left, reached the Aisne; the other, that of Vauclerc, situated on our right, opened into the valley of the Lette, in the midst of which stands the celebrated abbey of Vauclerc. The two ravines abut, one

on the right the other on the left, on the flanks of the plateau, at a place called the "*ferme d'Heurtebise,*" and offered facilities for attacking in the rear the troops that defended the principal position. Ney, with his two divisions of the Young Guard, supported by a portion of Nansouty's cavalry, was to enter into the valley of Oulches, whilst Victor, with the two divisions of the Young Guard, passing through that of Vauclerc, was to debouch on the plateau, in the direction of the *ferme d'Heurtebise,* and in proximity to Ney. Napoleon, in the centre, with the Old Guard, the artillery reserve, and the bulk of the cavalry, had taken up his position on the little plateau of Craonne, ready to command an attack on the great plateau when the movement of his wings would render it possible. At the same time, Marmont was coming from Berry-au-Bac to protect our rear. All our troops having been obliged to defile in succession by the single bridge of Berry-au-Bac, the greater part of our artillery was left behind—a circumstance very much to be regretted in sight of an enemy who had assembled in front of his position a considerable number of cannon.

At ten in the morning, Napoleon gave the signal for attack. Victor on the right advanced into the Valley of Vauclerc, Ney on the left, into that of Oulches. Victor, with a brigade of the Boyer division, advanced into the park of Vauclerc, where he found Woronzoff's infantry, in a strong position, and protected by a numerous artillery, firing from the summit of the plateau. After sustaining considerable losses, Victor made himself master of the park of Vauclerc. Above him, on the side of the hill, rose houses and gardens in tiers. The enemy had placed reserves here, that were to fall on the Boyer division, but the movement was executed too late. This division, solidly established in the buildings and gardens of the abbey, did not yield the post they had conquered. The enemy poured on them a murderous fire from their howitzers, and set in flames the buildings where they were lodged, but, spite the conflagration, they held their position.

Meanwhile was heard from the other side of the plateau, in the valley of Oulches, the cannon of Ney, who was opposed by Sacken, in his attempt to carry the *ferme d'Heurtebise.* The plateau being narrowed at this point, there was very little space between the extremity of the ravine of Oulches and that of Vauclerc, so that the two marshals were fighting in close proximity to one another. Ney had entered the valley of Oulches with his two divisions and Nansouty's cavalry. He had formed his cavalry into two columns, and had advanced under a fearful discharge of grape, for the Russians stationed large quantities of artillery at every outlet. The soldiers of Ney, young and enthusiastic, supported this fire bravely, and reached the confines of the plateau, but, having arrived there, they were met by Sacken's infantry, who received them with a sharp fire of musketry, and drove them back to the bottom of the ravine. However, the fate of the war depended on the result of this battle, and Ney did not wish that the result should be determined by the

bad conduct of troops under his command. Undiscouraged, he rallied his soldiers at the bottom of the ravine; with that soul-stirring warmth they never resisted, he spoke to them, revived their drooping courage, and conceived the design of forming them into one column, and leading them to the charge at a running pace, so that the enemy should not have time to use their muskets. The soldiers form in column, with the resolution either to conquer or perish; they advance through the ravine, and, having reached the extremity, dash forward, the marshal at their head, under a hail of balls; with the rapidity of lightning, they fall on Sacken's infantry, that, taken by surprise, cannot sustain the shock, and are obliged to fall back. The infantry, thus disconcerted, retrogrades to a little hamlet called Paissy, leaving to Ney's two divisions sufficient space to deploy. Whilst Ney's left establish themselves on the plateau, his right fall on the farm of Heurtebise; enter, spite the enemy's resistance, and kill all who occupy the place. After some moments, Sacken's infantry, having recovered their first emotion, endeavour to regain the place they had lost, but Ney's soldiers, now enjoying equal advantages of position, are determined not to yield the border of the plateau so dearly purchased; both sides fire nearly *à bout portant.* Victor, encouraged by Ney's success, has no idea of doing less himself. The Boyer division, after seizing the abbey of Vauclerc, wished to debouch on the plateau, and established themselves with the Charpentier division on the borders of a little wood, that extends from the abbey of Vauclerc to the hamlet of Ailles. Having taken up a position there, they supported unflinchingly the fire of sixty pieces of cannon. These two flank attacks having freed the centre, Napoleon, at the head of the Old Guard, ascended the plateau, almost without striking a blow, and took up a position opposite the farm of Heurtebise. He thus formed a line, connecting Ney's attack with that of Victor. The delay of our artillery left us exposed to the fire of the enemy's numerous cannon. To compensate for this disadvantage, Napoleon sent four of Drouot's batteries, that immediately deployed between Ney and Victor. The fire was then less unequal, but still terribly destructive, and, though exposed to a shower of bullets and grape, the Charpentier and Boyer divisions kept their post with unshaken firmness.

On the left, in the centre, on the right, we had made good our footing on the plateau, but this was not enough; it was necessary to keep the place, to extend our lines, and drive off the enemy. The moment had come when the cavalry ought to sustain the infantry, for beyond the farm of Heurtebise the ground opens out. Nansouty's cavalry, having followed Ney through the ravine of Oulches, and having debouched with him on the plateau, pass between the intervals of his battalions, and rush on the enemy—the Polish lancers and horse chasseurs at the head, the grenadiers in reserve. These brave horsemen, finding here space to deploy, advance in full gallop, cut their way through several Russian squares, force them back on the hamlet of Paissy, whence it is only a step to drive

them into a ravine parallel to that of Oulches, and leading to the Aisne; but in falling back the Russian infantry unmask a line of artillery, that pours grape on our cavalry, and stops their advance. They are obliged to return in order to avoid this destructive fire, and are pursued by twelve Russian squadrons. The latter in their turn, charge with such impetuosity that they outride the horse grenadiers of the guard, who had remained in the second line. At sight of this sudden storm of cavalry, Ney's young soldiers lose their presence of mind, and fly towards the ravine of Oulches, whence they had so bravely advanced to the conquest of the plateau. It was in vain that Ney, throwing himself into the midst of them, appealed with his strong voice and energetic gestures; they continued to flee, seized with inexplicable terror, a phenomenon not unfrequent with young troops, whose susceptibility renders them as prompt to retreat as to attack. Napoleon, stationed a little in the rear, watching over the vicissitudes of the battle, sends Grouchy, with the remainder of the cavalry, to fill the void just made in the line of battle, and extend a veil, which, hiding the scene from our fugitives, might allow them to recover their presence of mind. Grouchy arrives, occupies the appointed place, and is about to charge, when he falls wounded from his horse. Deprived of their leader, our cavalry remain motionless. Still, however, they protect Ney's efforts to rally his infantry. Towards our right, Victor, at the head of the Boyer and Charpentier divisions, resolutely maintains his position on the confines of the wood of Ailles; but being severely wounded, General Charpentier takes his place. Napoleon, fearing that his wings, which could hardly keep their position on the confines of the plateau, might ultimately yield, sent forward a division of the Old Guard to deploy between them. These old soldiers advance with a determined step between our two wings, whilst, at the same moment, twenty-four pieces of artillery, so long expected, arrive. This remedies our inferiority in artillery, and it is time, for Drouot's cannon are nearly all dismounted. These twenty-four pieces of artillery formed into a battery, between the troops of Ney and Victor, soon commence to pour forth their fiery torrents on the Russians, causing them considerable loss. Sacken's and Woronzoff's infantry, after resisting some time, yield in their turn, under repeated discharges of grape; they retreat, and leave us in possession of the ground. A simultaneous thrill runs from one end of our battle line to the other; our soldiers wish to pursue the enemy. Victor's troops, making a last effort, seize the village of Ailles, and establish themselves definitely on the right of the army. Ney's troops do not remain behind, and our entire line crosses the plateau, which sometimes widens, sometimes narrows, and drives back Sacken's and Woronzoff's infantry on that of Langeron. The Russian cavalry endeavour in vain to make a charge to cover this retreat, our chasseurs and horse grenadiers dash forward and repulse them. Having taken refuge behind the infantry, they form, and try to return to the charge; our dragoons drive them back again.

Our troops thus traverse victoriously the summit of the plateau; their left on the Aisne, their right on the Lette, overtopping by some hundred feet the beds of these two rivers, and driving before them the 50,000 men of Sacken, Woronzoff, and Langeron. The pursuit continues in this fashion during a space of two leagues, that is to say, as far as Filain, and as the enemy appeared at this place desirous of descending into the valley of the Lette, our left, animated by a sudden reactionary emotion, briskly urge their descent. Our artillery, compensating for their tardy arrival, pursue the enemy to the entrance of the valley, and cover them with grape, until they find a shelter in the woody depths of the bed of the Lette.

Night was approaching; and nothing indicated that we need fear an attack on our flanks or our rear. In fact this irruption of Wintzingerode's 15,000 horse, a project, of which Napoleon was not aware, but whose possibility he admitted, and against which he had taken his precautions, by leaving a division of the Old Guard and Marmont's corps at the foot of the Craonne heights, had not yet been executed at the close of the day. Notwithstanding the solicitations of Blucher, who attached much importance to this combination—Wintzingerode's cavalry having entered the valley of the Lette in the midst of a woody and marshy country, where they embarrassed the infantry of Kleist, and were in turn embarrassed by them—had not reached Festieux until very late in the day, and had not dared, at that hour, to attempt an enterprise, that presented dangers as well as advantages. Blucher was therefore obliged to content himself, for that day, with the loss of the plateau of Craonne.

Such was this bloody battle of Craonne, consisting of the conquest of an elevated plateau, defended by 50,000 men and a numerous artillery, and attacked by 30,000 with a few cannon. The tenacity on the one side, and the intrepidity on the other, had been admirable; and on our side, the Boyer and Charpentier division had displayed, besides intrepidity, extraordinary firmness under fire. Ney had been, as usual, one of the heroes of the day. The Russians had lost from 6 to 7,000 men, and no one will be surprised to learn that, debouching under a terrible fire, we had lost from 7 to 8,000. Our loss would have been greater, had not our artillery—delayed, not by any fault of theirs, but by the distance—come at length, and compensated by its ravages those we had sustained. Could we next day draw any useful consequences from this noble effort made by our army? Had the blood of our brave soldiers flowed for the benefit of France? Such was the question to be resolved within the forty-eight hours: and whose solution, alas, did not depend on the genius of Napoleon, for had it depended on that, it would not have been one moment doubtful.

Napoleon, though satisfied with this first result, and touched by the devotedness of his troops, was deeply absorbed in thought next day, but his determination to fight, resulting from the necessity of conquering Blucher, before falling back on Schwarzenberg, was still the same. He only deliberated on one point, that was to de-

cide, now that he was master of the plateau of Craonne, by which side he should descend into the plain of Laon. But here again a necessity, almost as absolute as that of fighting, obliged him to march by the chaussée of Soissons to Laon, and this was the necessity of placing himself between these two cities, in order to occupy the Paris route. Unfortunately this chaussée presented much greater difficulties than that of Reims, in advancing to the plain of Laon. Having arrived at that part of the plateau that lies between Aizy and Filain, we should be obliged to turn to the right, descend into the valley of the Lette, between Chavignon and Urcel, and enter a defile, bordered on the left by wooded heights and on the right by the stream Ardon, that runs from Laon, and is bordered by marshy prairies. We meet on the way, successively, the villages of Etouvelles and Chivy, and debouch afterwards by the chaussée of Soissons into the plain of Laon. To lead the entire army into this narrow defile, where there was only the breadth of the chaussée to manœuvre, was extremely dangerous. In fact the enemy occupying strongly the villages of Etouvelles and Chivy, could bring us to a full stop. However, we had no choice of operations, for to proceed to the right and take the high road from Reims to Laon, which crosses the Aisne at Berry-au-Bac, would be leaving the high road to Soissons unprotected, and had Napoleon been from the beginning satisfied to take the route to Reims, it would not have been worth while to lose 7,000 men to conquer the plateau of Craonne. The serious necessity of remaining in the vicinity of Soissons having outweighed every other consideration in the first battle, ought to be of equal importance in the second. Consequently, Napoleon, who, on the evening of the 7th, had bivouaced on the plateau, took up a position on the 8th between Ange-Gardien and Chavignon, at the entrance to the defile that leads to the plain of Laon. This day he gave his troops that they might rest, and that Marshal Marmont might have time to fall into line.

Napoleon wished to make use of Marmont's troops to remedy as much as possible the inconvenience of the position in which he was obliged to place himself. Marshal Marmont had just received from Paris a fresh division of reserve, composed, like those commanded by General Gérard, of battalions of the line, hastily formed in the depôts. This division comprised 4,000 conscripts, drilled, like the others, during fifteen or twenty days, but led by officers whose courage was raised to the highest pitch by the danger of France and the threatened honour of our arms. This division, placed under the orders of the Duke of Padua, raised Marmont's troops to 12 or 13,000 men, and increased the total of Napoleon's force to 48 or 50,000, deducting the losses incurred at the battle of Craonne. Napoleon resolved to send the Duke of Ragusa's corps along the route that he did not wish to take himself—that leading from Reims to Laon. This corps passing through Festieux, and having no great difficulties to conquer, would take up a position on our right in the plain of Laon, and by attracting the attention of the enemy, would facili-

tate to our principal column the passage of the defile between Etouvelles and Chivy. Undoubtedly there was danger, even with this precaution, for Napoleon debouching on the left through a narrow defile, and Marmont debouching unprotected on the right into the plain of Laon, at a distance of three leagues, they might be separately overwhelmed without being able to render each other any assistance. But what was to be done? On what side was there not danger, and even greater danger than that they were braving? It was not possible in fact to turn away from Blucher without having beaten him; it was not possible to follow *en masse* the route from Reims, without leaving that of Soissons unprotected, which was the high road to Paris; therefore debouching by the defile from Etouvelles to Chivy, was the result of a concatenation of necessities to which the Emperor was obliged to submit, diminishing as best he could the difficulties of the operation. There was evidently a better chance of forcing the defile if we aided the attack on the left by an accessory demonstration on the right. Besides, the obstacle once overcome, Napoleon by advancing rapidly to the right, to aid Marmont, and the latter proceeding cautiously into the plain of Laon, the principal danger of the operation might be avoided. As to the rest, we must repeat, there was only a choice of perils. The greatest of all would have been to hesitate and not to act.

The 8th having been devoted to refresh and rally the troops, Napoleon resolved on the morning of the 9th to advance into the humid plain of Laon. The daring Ney was to lead the van, and force the defile from Etouvelles to Chivy. To facilitate the execution of his task, Napoleon commanded General Gourgand to lead, during the night, some light troops across the wooded hillocks that overlooked our left, and turn the defile by appearing suddenly on the flank of the chaussée between Etouvelles and Chivy. The Roussel division of Dragoons had orders, as soon as the defile should be passed, to dash in full gallop on the city of Laon and endeavour to enter pêle-mêle with the enemy.

Marshal Ney, to insure success, set out on the 9th, before day-break, whilst the allied troops were still sunk in profound sleep. The second light infantry, under the conduct of this intrepid marshal, rushed in close column on Etouvelles, surprised and put to the sword Czernicheff's vanguard; and, after taking possession of the little village, threw themselves on Chivy, which they also mastered. It even happened that General Gourgand's little column that had been sent to turn the defile, having encountered greater difficulty than the principal column, did not reach Chivy until after Marshal Ney had taken possession of the place. General Gourgand joined Ney at the moment he was entering the plain of Laon. Roussel's division of dragoons then dashed in full gallop on the chaussée, but their progress was arrested by grape poured from a battery of twelve pieces; the leader of a squadron and some men were killed. The cavalry were, therefore, obliged to pause and wait the arrival of the infantry before they could attack Laon. As to

the rest, the defile they had believed so formidable was happily cleared, and the entire army could now deploy in the plain. Ney took up a position in advance of Chivy, opposite the Semilly suburb. Charpentier placed himself on the left with Marshal Victor's two divisions of the Young Guard; Mortier was stationed on the right with the second division of the Old Guard, and with the Poret de Morvan division of the Young Guard. Friant, at the head of the principal division of the Old Guard, took his place in the centre towards the rear. Lastly, came the cavalry and the artillery reserve, making a total of 36,000 combatants. Marmont, at three leagues to the right, separated from Napoleon by the wooded heights, was stationed on the Reims route, waiting the sound of our cannon to venture into the plain.

A thick fog overspread the valley in the middle of which Laon is built; scarcely were the spires of the city discernible rising above this vapour as from a sea. Favoured by the fog Ney threw himself on the Semilly suburb, situate at the foot of the height on which the town stands; Mortier, on the right with the Poret de Morvan division, advanced on the Ardon suburb, situate in a similar manner. The vivacity of the attack, the dash of a successful commencement, the fog, all contributed to the success of this two-fold attempt. Within an hour we made ourselves masters of the two suburbs.

But we soon perceived through the fog, that began to clear off, the singular site that was to become our battle-field, and the enemy might recover their spirits on seeing distinctly the small number of soldiers that had attacked 100,000 men.

Laon is built on a triangular peak, not unlike a tripod, and about 200 metres in height. This eminence commands on every side the verdant valley by which it is surrounded. The old town, enclosed by embattled walls and towers, occupies the entire summit of the hill. At the foot in the plain there are to the south the two suburbs of Semilly and Ardon, of which we had just taken possession. To the north there was the suburb of Neuville on the left, of Saint Marcel in the centre, and de Vaux on the right, that we could not see, because the city hid them from us. Blucher, after having ceded the plateau of Craonne to our efforts, was determined to dispute the plain of Laon by taking strong hold of the wall-crowned rock that commanded it, and of the suburbs built around. He possessed too much courage, too much patriotism, too much pride, to abandon to 48,000 men, a battle-field where he headed 100,000 men; a battle-field whose defence was easy and whose importance was incontestible; and, after abandoning which, nothing would remain for him but to retreat without knowing where to pause, for the army of Silesia was separated from the army of Bohemia, so that a junction was impossible. The fate of the war then depended on the possession of Laon, and for both parties it became a matter of necessity either to become masters of the city or perish.

Blucher had an additional motive for making a determined resistance. In consequence of the jealousy that prevailed between the

Prussians and Russians—though they were the most united amongst the Allies—a false notion prevailed amongst the latter that at Craonne the Prussians had knowingly allowed them to be worsted by the enemy. This prejudice, unreasonable as the prejudices generally are that spring up between allies making war in conjunction, had caused a serious misunderstanding between them, and a battle, where no person would spare himself, was become, besides the military necessity we have already noted, an absolute moral and political necessity. Influenced by these different reasons, Blucher had resolved to defend Laon *à outrance*, and he had for that purpose made excellent arrangements.

The Prussian troops that had not fought on the previous evening were distributed —part on the hill of Laon, part in the plain, opposite the suburbs of Semilly and Ardon, that we had just carried. They were to defend the principal post—that of Laon itself. On the side towards our left and the enemy's right, Woronzoff was placed between Laon and Clacy, opposite the woody heights through which we had debouched. The corps of Generals Kleist and d'York, combined into one, were stationed at the opposite extremity—that is to say, at our right and the left of the enemy facing the Reims route, by which Marmont was expected. There remain Sacken and Langeron, that Blucher had placed behind the hill of Laon, hidden from our view as from our fire, and able, as circumstances may require, to advance either on the Soisson chaussée or on that of Reims. Blucher, ignorant of our plan, did not know on which side the principal attack would be made; he had only learned from his scouts that the French troops were advancing along the two routes, and it was on this account he placed a great body of reserve behind Laon to be sent wherever the danger should be greatest.

As soon as the fog cleared off Blucher ordered the Semilly suburb, lying at the extremity of the Soissons route, to be attacked. Ney had taken possession of the suburb. Blucher also commanded an attack on the suburb of Ardon, situated a little to the right of the Soisson route. Mortier had made himself master of the suburb, that he might be ready to aid Marmont. Woronzoff's infantry attacked Semilly, and that of Bulow did the same at Ardon. As customary in an offensive attack, the Prussians displayed great vigour, entered the two suburbs, and dislodged our soldiers. Already even, Woronzoff's column, that had carried Semilly, was advancing *en masse* along the Soissons chaussée, and this movement would cut off the means of retreat from Mortier's troops, who, driven out of Ardon, were scattered in confusion on the right. At this sight, Marshal Ney, putting himself at the head of some squadrons of the Guard, dashes on the Prussian infantry, stops their onward course, gives his own infantry time to rally, and leads them on Semilly, of which he victoriously regains possession. Whilst Ney was performing this exploit in our front, General Belliard, on our right, replacing Grouchy in the command of the cavalry, put himself at the head of the dragoons of Spain (Roussel division), charges in his

turn Bulow's infantry, defeats them, and opens to Mortier the road to Ardon.

After having several times taken, lost, and retaken these suburbs of Semilly and Ardon, situate at the foot of the rock of Laon, the two armies remained grouped around these two points, and bitterly exasperated against each other. The enemy regained possession of half a suburb, were driven out, and immediately returned again. Napoleon, burning with impatience, despatched aide-de-camp after aide-de-camp to Marshal Marmont, to hasten his approach; for he flattered himself, with reason, that the sudden appearance of this marshal would produce a moral panic amongst the Allies, of which he would profit to force them from the foot of this hill, to which they were so strongly attached. But three leagues of marsh and wooded hills to traverse, and a cloud of Cossacks, left little hope of communicating with Marmont.

Meanwhile Napoleon, believing that, were there any means of dislodging Blucher from this fatal rock of Laon, it would be by outflanking him, ordered the brave Charpentier, with his two divisions of the Young Guard, who had covered themselves with glory the preceding evening, to file along the wooded heights that surround the plain, and carry the village of Clacy on our left, whence they could advance and turn Laon by the Neuville suburb and the route de la Fère.

This order was bravely executed. The sharpshooters advanced through the woods, to divide the attention of the enemy; whilst General Charpentier, skirting the foot of the heights, traversed successively Vaucelles, Mons-en-Laonnois, and at length reached the village of Clacy, that was occupied by one of Woronzoff's divisions. Friant, with a division of the Old Guard, followed to support him if necessary. Charpentier fell on Clacy with such vigour that he entered, spite of a most determined resistance on the part of the Prussians. Our young soldiers, infuriated by the spirit of carnage, bayonetted some hundreds of the enemy. We made some hundred prisoners. This success on our left was of sufficient importance to influence the fate of the battle, for it gave us some chance of turning Blucher. It was neutralised, however, on our right, by the loss of the Ardon suburb. Bulow threw himself, for the last time, furiously on that point. The Poret de Morvan division had their general killed, and were obliged to fall back. But, in the centre, Ney had remained master of the Semilly suburb, that commanded the chaussée of Soissons. On the right, if we had lost Ardon, we had taken possession of the village of Semilly; on the left, we held Clacy, whence it was possible to turn Laon. There was evidently a positive advantage gained by the main column, commanded by Napoleon in person; and, spite our numerical inferiority, we might still hope to conquer the plain of Laon, so deeply bedewed with blood; but we could only hope to conquer on condition that on our extreme right, that is to say, on the Reims route, success should crown our efforts.

Effectively, on the Reims route, Marmont had at length debouched from Festieux into the plain of Laon. His cannon was heard at two in the afternoon, and filled Napoleon with hope, Blucher with anxiety.

He had advanced along the Reims route, on the village of Athies, in sight of the enemy's cavalry, with the young division of Padua at the head of his column. He had repulsed the attacks of the cavalry, and had drawn near to the village of Athies. The troops of d'York and Kleist had possession of the place. Marmont, who heard the cannon of the Emperor, and who felt the necessity of doing something on this day to aid his designs, thought he ought to carry Athies. Wishing to render the attack as easy as possible to his young troops, he placed forty pieces of artillery in his front, and cannonaded the village unceasingly. He afterwards commanded the Duke of Padua's infantry to make an assault, and the place was carried. The day drawing to a close, he paused and established himself on the spot that conquest had made his.

Up to that point all went on well, and that day, though we had only accomplished half our work, promised good results on the next, if we could only compensate for our numerical inferiority. This was a serious difficulty, for we were fighting under a disadvantage of two to one, and with young troops against the veteran bands of Europe. However, such extraordinary feats had been performed during this campaign, and especially on the two previous days, that, if on the morrow the French troops dashed vigorously from the point they had already reached, Marmont thus drawing towards him the principal mass of the enemy, Napoleon could bring his troops from Clacy, on the rear of Laon, and the victory would be almost certain. But that affairs should assume this aspect, a fortunate combination of circumstances would be needed. In the first place, the French should combine at a great distance, and then advance through woods, through marshy plains, and crowds of Cossacks, and afterwards pass the night, especially Marmont, in very unsafe positions.

Marmont, unprotected at the village of Athies, in the midst of the plain, awaited Napoleon's instructions, which he had sent Colonel Fabvier, at the head of five hundred men, to learn. Was it well of Marmont to remain stationary, or ought he not rather, after having during the day caught a sight of the immense masses of the enemy's cavalry, to have taken up a position for the night in the rear, towards Festieux for example, a kind of little hillock by which he had debouched into the plain and where he would have been in perfect safety. But the mistaken fear of abandoning the spot he had conquered in the afternoon, restrained him, and deterred him from making the retrograde movement that prudence would have suggested. What was still less excusable, as he did remain amidst hordes of enemies, was the not multiplying precautions against a night attack. With a characteristic thoughtlessness that detracted from his good qualities, Marmont deputed to his lieutenants the duty of providing for the common safety. The latter

allowed their young tired soldiers to scatter themselves in the neighbouring farms; they did not even think of protecting the battery of forty pieces that had cannonaded Athies with so much success. It was young marine-gunners, little accustomed to land service, that tended these cannon, and they had not taken the precaution to place their guns on the avant train, so that they might be able to remove them at the first appearance of danger. Everybody, commander and officers, trusted to the darkness of night, of which they ought, on the contrary, to have entertained the deepest distrust.

There were, alas! only too many reasons for distrusting this fatal night, for Blucher, as soon as he heard Marmont's cannon, believed that the attack by the Reims route was the true attack, and that the other, which had occupied the day on the Soissons route, was only a feint. He consequently decided to bring down the mass of his army on the Reims route. He immediately put into motion Sacken and Langeron, who had remained *en reserve* behind Laon. They had orders to make a circuitous march round the city, and join Kleist and d'York; Blucher, besides, sent part of his cavalry, which on that side could not fail to be useful. The day was far advanced when this movement was terminated; still the Prussian General was not willing to bind himself to preparatory arrangements, and conceived the design of profiting by the darkness to effect a night surprise, by leading on his cavalry *en masse*.

Towards midnight in fact, when Marmont's soldiers least expected it, a mass of horsemen dashed upon them, uttering terrific cries. Old soldiers accustomed to the vicissitudes of war would have been less surprised, and sooner rallied; but a sudden panic spread through the ranks of this young infantry, that took flight in every direction. The artillerymen, who had not thought of arranging their pieces so that they might be easily removed, fled without thinking of them. The enemy, amid the darkness, become mixed with us, and make part of the tumult; whilst their horsed artillery pursue us, firing grape, at the risk of killing Prussians as well as French. All hurry on in indescribable disorder, not knowing what to do, and Marmont is carried away at the same pace as the rest. Fortunately the 6th corps, which formed the nucleus of Marmont's troops, recover a little of their *sang froid*, and stop at the heights of Festieux, where it would have been so easy to find a secure position during the night. The enemy, not daring to advance further, suspend the pursuit, and our soldiers, delivered from their presence, rally at length from their disorder.

This accident, one of the most vexatious that could befal a general, particularly on account of the consequences it involved, cost [illegible] materially only some pieces of cannon, two or three hundred men put *hors de combat*, and about a thousand prisoners, the greater number of whom returned next day; but our enterprize, already so difficult and complicated, was defeated. On learning during the night this deplorable skirmish, Napoleon gave way to the most violent anger against

Marshal Marmont; but giving way to anger would not repair the mischief, and he immediately began to think what was best to be done. To give up the attack and retire would be to commence a retreat that must lead to the ruin of France and his own. To attack, when the movement confided to Marmont was no longer possible, and when he would be confronted by masses of the enemy assembled between Laon and the Soissons chaussée; to attack under such circumstances would have been rash. Either course seemed to lead to destruction. Listening only to the promptings of his own energetic soul, Napoleon determined to make a desperate attempt on Laon, and see whether chance, so fruitful of events in war, might not do for him what the most skilfully-laid plans had not been able to effect.

Napoleon was about to throw himself on Laon when Blucher anticipated him. The latter had first thought of sending half his army against Marmont, believing his to be our principal column. But in his staff numerous voices were raised against this project, and it was proved to him that, above all things, he ought to oppose Napoleon in front of the city of Laon. Blucher, who was ill that day, and more inclined than usual to yield to the advice of his lieutenants, had, therefore, suspended the prescribed movement, and determined to direct his efforts straight before him, that is to say, on Clacy, whence Napoleon threatened to turn his position.

At the very moment that Napoleon was putting his troops in motion to renew the attack, three divisions of Woronzoff's infantry, advancing on our left, deployed around the village of Clacy, intending to carry the place. General Charpentier, who had replaced Victor, was at Clacy with his own division of the Young Guard and that of General Boyer, both very much reduced in number by the late engagements. Ney had on his side advanced to the left to support General Charpentier; he placed his artillery a little in the rear and diagonally, so that he could take the Russian masses *en écharpe* that were about to fall on Clacy. At nine in the morning an obstinate engagement commenced around this unfortunate village, whose site, happily for us, was slightly elevated. General Charpentier, who during the past days had displayed as much energy as skill, allowed the Russian infantry to advance within musket shot, and then received them with a terrible fusillade. The officers and sub-officers exposed themselves incessantly, seeking to compensate for the want of training in their young soldiers, who, in every respect, exhibited an unexampled devotedness. The first Russian division was received with so destructive a fire that they were driven back to the foot of the position, and immediately replaced by another that received like treatment. The assailing troops were exposed, not alone to the fire from Clacy, but to that of Marshal Ney's artillery, which, happily posted as we have just related, committed fearful ravages in the enemy's ranks. In truth, some of the projectiles from this artillery knocked off some of our soldiers at Clacy, but in the enthusiasm that prevailed we only

thought of checking the enemy and destroying them, no matter at what price.

The same attack, renewed five times by the Russians, failed five times through the heroism of General Charpentier and his soldiers. The Russians, repulsed, fell back on Laon. Napoleon, again conceiving some slight hopes, and flattering himself with having, perhaps, tired out the tenacity of Blucher, ordered Ney's two divisions (Meunier and Curial) to advance straight on Laon, through the Semilly suburb, which we had not evacuated. Our young soldiers, led by Ney to the hillock, overturned everything before them, ascended one side of the triangular peak of Laon, and taking advantage of the conformation of the land, which here was hollowed and receding, they succeeded in attaining the walls of the city. But Bulow's infantry stopped them at the foot of the ramparts, then pouring forth showers of grape, forced them to redescend this fatal height, before which our good fortune deserted us. Napoleon, however, who did not yet abandon the hope of driving Blucher from his position, sent Drouot at the head of a detachment to a great distance on our left, to try whether it would not be possible to advance along the route of La Fère and annoy the enemy sufficiently to make him let go his hold.

Drouot, whose sincerity was never called in question, having, after a daring reconnaissance, pronounced this last attempt impracticable, Napoleon was obliged to admit the belief that Blucher's position was impregnable. The positions of each had been so during the last twenty-four hours; Blucher had been as powerless against Clacy and Semilly as Napoleon against Laon. But Napoleon's position would not continue impregnable twenty-four hours longer, should Blucher execute his project of marching *en masse* by the route from Laon to Reims, to drive Marmont back on Berry-au-Bac and cross the Aisne on our right. It was therefore impossible for Napoleon to remain where he was; he was obliged to retrace his steps and fall back on Soissons. However painful this determination might be, still, as it was indispensable, Napoleon made up his mind without hesitation, and the next morning, the 11th of March, he repassed the defile of Chivy and Etouvelles, to fall back on Soissons, whilst Marmont, posted on the bridge of Berry-au-Bac, defended the Aisne above him. The enemy took especial care not to pursue this angry lion, the thought of whose return made even a victorious enemy tremble. Napoleon could therefore return to Soissons without disquietude.

These three terrible days—the 7th at Craonne, the 9th and 10th at Laon, had cost Napoleon about 12,000 men; and if they cost the enemy 15,000, that was a poor consolation, because [illegible] adversaries had still 90,000 soldiers, whilst we had little more than 40,000, including even the small division of the Duke of Padua, who had come to reinforce Marshal Marmont. But the worst of all was, not the numerical but the moral loss, and the military consequences of the last operations.

To neglect Schwarzenberg a moment, in order again to discomfit Blucher, and afterwards return to Schwarzenberg, either by falling directly on the latter or by first calling out the garrisons; such was the last project Napoleon devised, and which ought, if fortune did not prove a traitor, enable him to drive his enemies from France. But not having beaten Blucher, though he had chastised him severely, he was about to be pursued by this indefatigable adversary in going to attack Schwarzenberg, and he thus ran the risk of seeing them both combine to overwhelm him. The danger was palpable and difficult to avoid.

Napoleon returned deeply dejected to Soissons, but less dejected than his soldiers, who comprehended perfectly well the position of affairs, and began to fear that their efforts would be powerless to save France. But the inflexible spirit of Napoleon, enlightened by his great experience, which had shown him that the chances of war are inexhaustible, and that affairs are never desperate provided a general perseveres—the inflexible spirit of Napoleon was not cast down. He still reckoned on the erroneous movements of the enemy, and flattered himself that a fault of the presumptuous Blucher, perhaps of the prudent Schwarzenberg himself, would restore him the good fortune he had lost. As to the rest, he was still placed between his two adversaries, and consequently in a position to prevent their junction; he had still some resources at Paris; and, if he abandoned the capital to itself, to advance towards the fortresses, he would necessarily command still greater reinforcements, with which he might perhaps change the face of things. He preserved a firmness of mind, of which few warriors have given an example, perhaps not one, for no man ever fell from so high an eminence into so fearful an abyss. He had, in fact, excited the anger of the entire world against himself personally, and had completely lost the affections of France. He still possessed, it is true, an admirable corps of officers, formed in his school, and filled with a pious despair, which they communicated to the heroic youth of France who joined them as they marched; all advancing to the slaughter together. Besides, he still retained his inexhaustible genius, and a well-founded pride in the great deeds he had accomplished; and he was not disturbed, for, without doubt, even in his fall, he saw visioned before him that indestructible glory which to the latest posterity shall halo his name. Having returned to Soissons, which the enemy had not dared to keep, he watched, with his eye fixed on his enemies, which of them should commit the fault of which he hoped to profit. He had been in the town twenty-four hours busied in distributing bread and shoes to his young soldiers, to whom he also allowed some repose, and whom he also tried to drill a little better, when one of his numerous pursuing enemies chanced to come within his reach. This was General Priest, who brought a new detachment, called off from the blockade of the fortress, and replaced by German militia. He had advanced from the Ardennes on Reims, and had repulsed from this city Cor-

bineau's detachment. This detachment consisted of 15,000 soldiers, Russians and Prussians, commanded by an excellent officer, unfortunately French, whom hatred of the *régime* of 1793 had driven to Russia, and who had not returned when this *régime* had ceased to bedew France with blood. These 15,000 men were not a prey of sufficient importance to indemnify Napoleon for his late losses; but, falling on them, he would at least prove that it was still dangerous to be in his neighbourhood, and might render his enemies more circumspect. Whilst waiting a better chance this was not to be despised.

Whilst Blucher was stopped on the banks of the Aisne by Marshal Marmont's presence at Berry-au-Bac, Napoleon prepared to go from Soissons to Reims to overthrow Saint-Priest's corp. On the evening of the 12th, he ordered Marmont to leave at Berry-au-Bac whatever forces were indispensably necessary, and to advance to Reims with the rest, whilst he repaired there by the route of Fismes. They were the following morning—the 13th—to effect a junction within a league of Reims. The greatest secresy was commanded and observed.

On the night of the 12th March, Napoleon, after having ordered thirty pieces of cannon to be formed into a battery at Soissons, behind *sacs à terre et des tonneaux*, after having destroyed every obstacle that impeded the defence, after having left as a garrison some fragments of battalions and a good commander, he set out for Reims, enjoying the demi-satisfaction that the success he was about to achieve inspired. At the break of day he met Marmont's corps and the marshal himself, whom he reproached, but yet not so severely as he might have done; he then urged forward to Reims the 30,000 men he had assembled for this *coup de main*.

On the way Napoleon fell in on the right, at the village of Rosney, with two Prussian battalions that were making soup. He disturbed their repast by making them all prisoners, spite of a certain amount of resistance on their part; he soon after found himself opposite Reims. Napoleon, who wished to cut off the entire of Saint-Priest's corps, conceived the idea of sending his cavalry across the Vesle, and making them advance beyond Reims, to cut off the retreat of the imprudent enemy that had fallen into his snares. But the allies had destroyed the bridge it had cost him so much time to rebuild, and he was forced to content himself with driving back on Reims Saint-Priest's troops, who had issued from the city to defend the heights. The French attacked the enemy with the greatest vigour; and, after a very short combat, drove them from the heights upon the town. Then the Emperor ordered the regiments of the Guard of Honour to rush upon them. General Philippe de Ségur, who commanded one of these regiments, turned the extreme left of the enemy, overthrew their cavalry, and captured eleven pieces of cannon. The Russian infantry taken in the rear by this movement rushed towards Reims. They wished to defend the city gates, but the French demolished them with cannon shot, and then

entered the town *pêle-mêle* with the Russians; they made 4,000 prisoners. This rapid *coup de main*, which scarcely cost us a few hundred men, deprived Saint-Priest's corps of 6,000—the remainder retreated. M. de Saint-Priest lost his life on this occasion.

This success, without restoring to Napoleon the ascendancy he possessed after Montmirail, had, however, the good effect of encouraging his soldiers and restraining the enemy, who now felt the necessity of weighing their least movement in presence of such an enemy. Napoleon paused at Reims to profit of any favorable circumstances that might arise.

The situation of affairs, both political and military, had undergone a serious change during the ten or twelve days the Emperor had been engaged combatting Blucher. On quitting Troyes, he had ordered Marshal Oudinot, General Gérard, and Marshal Macdonald, to continue to pursue Prince Schwarzenberg and drive him beyond the Aube, though he still pretended to negotiate an armistice at Lusigny. He had at the same time ordered his lieutenants, who had under their command more than 30,000 men, to make the soldiers at the outposts cry, "Vive l'Empereur!" in order to persuade the enemy that he had not left. But this illusion had endured only four-and-twenty hours. The manner in which the Austrian General had been pursued after the Emperor's departure was sufficient to prove his absence, and Prince Schwarzenberg, who had promised to resume offensive operations as soon as Napoleon's attention should be directed from him, had fulfilled his promise on the morning of the 27th February. Wishing to bring back to the Aube the French troops that had crossed the river in pursuit of him, he sent Marshal de Wrède towards Bar-sur-Aube, and Prince Wittgenstein in the direction of the bridge of Dolancourt. He kept under his own command Giulay and the Austrian reserves.

Marshal Oudinot and General Gérard had taken up a position on the Aube and Marshal Macdonald on the Seine. The two former, whose peril was greatest, having on the morning of the 27th perceived that the enemy had resumed offensive operations, had changed their position—General Gérard to Bar-sur-Aube and Marshal Oudinot to Dolancourt, to dispute at these two points, the passage of the Aube. Marshal Oudinot, thinking the situation of Dolancourt bad, for it was overlooked on every side by high grounds, and thinking, moreover, that a retrograde movement would reveal too clearly the absence of Napoleon, had determined to take up a position in advance of the Aube, and defend *à outrance* the heights of Arsonval and of Arrentières. Leaving the Pacthod division of the National Guards to cover the bridge of Dolancourt, he sent to the heights beyond, the two brigades of the Leval division and the remaining brigade of the Boyer division. These three divisions brought from Spain, supported by the dragoons, also from Spain, and comprising seven thousand foot soldiers and two thousand horse, with, at the utmost, thirty pieces of artillery, could

with great difficulty hold their ground, in sight of the enemy's hundred pieces of artillery. The Montfort and Chassé, brigades first exposed to a shower of grape, and afterwards attacked by the Austrian cuirassiers, had not yet yielded an inch, but repulsed every assault, whilst the Count de Valmy, fording the Aube, came to their assistance. These two infantry brigades, completely surrounded by the enemy, without exhibiting the slightest emotion, assisted alternately by the Pinoteau brigade and by the dragoons of Spain,—who charged at full gallop the formidable Austrian artillery and killed the gunners beside the cannon—kept possession of the battle-field during the entire day. At length, towards night, seeing the remainder of the grand army of Bohemia ready to fall upon them, they quitted the heights, regained the banks of the river, and effected their retreat in good order. This admirable combat, sustained on one side by, from eight to nine thousand men, first against thirty, and afterwards against forty thousand, had cost the enemy, three thousand, and us, two thousand men. Had Napoleon only had such soldiers, the result of this great struggle would certainly have been different.

Whilst Oudinot with the troops from Spain, so well defended the heights before Dolancourt, General Gérard, on his side, had checked the Bavarians before Bar-sur-Aube, and had killed several without losing many of his own troops, thanks to the barricades by which he was covered. Macdonald, hearing the cannonade, had hastened from the Seine to the Aube to co-operate in the defence of the attacked posts.

Although this sharp combat, in which Prince Wittgenstein had been seriously, and Prince Schwarzenberg slightly wounded, was of a nature to render the army of Bohemia still more prudent than usual, still it was easy to discern by the number of troops engaged, that this *corps d'armée* only served as a screen, and that Napoleon was elsewhere. Had Prince Schwarzenberg entertained a doubt on this subject, it must have vanished at seeing before him, at the utmost, eight or nine thousand men. Thenceforth his project of retreating on Chaumont, was abandoned, and whether that he was goaded by the reproaches of the allies; whether that he was jealous of keeping his word, pledged to the army of Silesia, he resolved to advance, and at least recover his position at Troyes, whilst Blucher continued to run the chances of an isolated march. Consequently, on the 28th he put his troops in motion, and the three French Generals, judging with reason, that the Aube was not tenable, and that Troyes even might be turned on every side, had fallen back on the Seine, between Nogent and Montereau, the rear guard engaged all the way in sharp skirmishes. Prince Schwarzenberg had followed them, had again taken possession of Troyes, and occupied the banks of the Seine from Nogent to Montereau. He had made a firm resolution that Blucher, advancing on Paris, should not advance alone.

The situation of affairs, considered in a military point of view,

had assumed a very gloomy colouring during the ten or twelve days employed by Napoleon in contending with Blucher. Politically considered, things had become wonderfully worse.

The conferences at Lusigny had been definitely abandoned, because Prince Schwarzenberg had no further need of them to free himself from Napoleon's pursuit, and because Napoleon persisted in bringing forward the frontier question under the veil of an armistice. On entering Troyes, the prince had dismissed the commissioners, who had endeavoured for a moment to arrest the effusion of blood by an armistice. As to the rest, he did so with regret, and solely constrained by the spirit that prevailed amongst the allies.

At Châtillon, in like manner, things were on the eve of a rupture. We have already said that when, on the 1st of March, at Chaumont, Lord Castlereagh had induced the Allies to sign a treaty, he had also persuaded them to fix a term, after which they would no longer wait M. de Caulaincourt's counter-project. The term fixed was the 10th March, and M. de Caulaincourt was informed that after that date, the congress would be dissolved, and all further negotiation deferred till either Napoleon or the Allies should have succumbed. Prince Esterhazy had been sent secretly by M. de Metternich, to M. de Caulaincourt, to repeat his former advice, of treating, treating, at any price, for should the present opportunity pass unprofitted of, the allies would never renew negotiations with Napoleon, and besides, they contemplated depriving him, not alone of the Rhine, but of his throne. M. de Caulaincourt had sent this intelligence to head quarters, imploring the Emperor to allow him to cede some points of the Frankfort bases; for if he persisted in his determination, the negotiations would be instantly broken off, and not only his imperial rank, but his very existence would be at stake.

The information transmitted by M. de Caulaincourt, and which he had gained from the secret but sincere counsels of Prince Esterhazy, was strictly true. To the impatience to enter Paris that Alexander experienced, to the furious hatred that influenced the Prussians, were now added the urgent solicitations of the royalist party. M. de Vitrolles, despatched, as we have seen, with a commission accredited by M. de Dalberg, but not by M. de Talleyrand, had succeeded, after many detours, in reaching the head-quarters of the Allies, and had obtained admission by using the tokens of recognition he brought from M. de Stadion. Though he was wholly unknown to the allied ministers, they, after some time, accorded him their confidence, as they listened to his sincere and impassioned language, as they listened, above all, to the names of the high personages under whose authority he acted. This was the first important communication the allied sovereigns had received, and it had the effect, not alone of affording them satisfaction, but of redoubling their courage, by holding out the hope of finding within Paris itself a party that would open the gates for them, and, having

secured their entrance, would aid them to constitute a government with whom they could negotiate; this hope, so strong when they had first crossed the Rhine, and which had since become so weak, on witnessing so few manifestations in favour of the Bourbons, now revived, and strengthened considerably their determination to advance. The Allies questioned M. de Vitrolles in detail about the state of Paris, they complained of knowing nothing on the subject, and repeated the old story, that, not having made war either for or against any dynasty, they would not think of dethroning Napoleon excepting France manifested a decided wish to that effect, in which case they would be happy to aid in delivering her from the yoke that weighed so heavily on her and on Europe. Upon this, M. de Vitrolles, adducing the names of MM. de Talleyrand and de Dalberg, who had great weight in the allied camp, much more than men of higher rank amongst the royalists; on this, we say, M. de Vitrolles replied, that France, trembling under the Imperial tyranny, dared not manifest her real sentiments; that, besides, knowing that the European courts were negotiating with Napoleon at Châtillon, she was still less disposed to raise the standard of revolt against him, a standard which the sovereigns in arms had not themselves dared to raise; but if they broke off definitely with Napoleon, the allied monarchs would see burst out on every side a unanimous demonstration in favour of the House of Bourbon. It was unfortunately true that the aversion of France to despotism and to war had weakened her horror of foreigners, and though she had completely forgotten the Bourbons, she would willingly accept any government whatsoever that would release her from sufferings that had become insupportable. This truth, undoubtedly much exaggerated by the envoy of MM. de Talleyrand and de Dalberg, had naturally made a profound impression on the ministers and sovereigns assembled at Troyes, and they informed M. de Vitrolles that they were obliged to continue the conferences at Châtillon to a certain date; that if Napoleon accepted the frontiers of 1793, they would treat with him; that, in the opposite case, they would break off, and then listen to whatever could be said in favour of another government, provided that this government was agreeable to the French people, and seemed likely to be permanent. But the partizans of war *à outrance*, though they had no reason to be excited, had, on learning the late intelligence, felt a still greater desire to break off the negotiations at Châtillon, and to march on Paris. This was the motive of the repeated and secret advice that Austria sent to M. de Caulaincourt. A few moments more, and the entire aspect of things would be changed.*

* The principal personage employed in these negotiations, M. de Vitrolles, has, in his spirited and yet unedited memoirs, given an account of his mission to the allied camp. I am indebted for a sight of these memoirs to the kindness of the gentleman in whose possession they are. I am therefore sure of the correctness of the recital I have just made, the more so as I have compared M. de Vitrolles' testimony with that of some of the principal personages of the time, and my narration is the result of these compared testimonies.

At Paris, too, things assumed a most threatening aspect. Napoleon had, as we have seen, sent the treaty proposed by the plenipotentiaries at Châtillon to the Regent, Maria Louisa, flattering himself that these dishonouring propositions would call up the indignation of all in whose veins French blood flowed. The different papers relative to the negotiation had been laid before a council held in presence of Maria Louisa and Joseph, on the 4th March. Napoleon, who had so much altered the truth with regard to the Prague negotiations, and even to those of Frankfort, had resolved this time to tell the entire truth, because he hoped it would excite an outburst of anger. Alas! the truth now only confounded those who heard it, enervated as they were by a long continued despotism. There were amongst the members of this council, good citizens and honest men, but they were as much afraid of offending Napoleon by advising an immediate peace, as they were of displeasing the public by recommending a prolongation of the war. They were, in fact, alarmed at being called on to deliberate on so grave a question. There were also present on this occasion, besides the Empress and Joseph, the grand dignitaries, the ministers, and some presidents of the *Conseil d'Etat*. After the different papers had been read, all observed a long silence, the combined result of surprise and terror. Then Joseph, who presided, having compelled each by a personal appeal to break silence, the twenty members stammered out their opinions in an embarrassed manner, and with a brevity that indicated, not energy but weakness. The proposed treaty, they all admitted was most humiliating; indeed, some, who did not hesitate to call things by their right names, declared it to be an actual capitulation. "It was to be hoped," they said; "that the genius of the Emperor, which had already accomplished so many prodigies, would effect one more, that of driving back the enemy, and forcing the concession of more favourable conditions. However, they did not know the precise state of affairs; the Emperor alone knew that; he alone could judge and give an enlightened advice on the subject—which was very true, thanks to the form of government—but if, however, the position of things was as desperate as was said, and as it seemed, judging by appearances, would it not be better to treat on the bases of the ancient frontiers, than to allow foreigners to enter Paris? It was impossible to hide the fact, that if foreigners entered the capital, they would not respect the glorious dynasty under which France then existed; foreigners would attempt a total change in the home government, and that was a calamity that ought to be averted at any cost. Undoubtedly, to lose Belgium would be a serious loss, but it was better to lose Belgium than France, and, above all, the throne. Besides, after all, France such as she had been under Louis XIV., having her emperor at her head, would be still great, for her greatness did not depend on having one or two provinces more or less. Napoleon had given sufficient proofs of possessing a warlike genius, it was to be desired that he should now find time to exhibit a genius for peace, and

procure his country as great an amount of happiness as he had already done of glory. Then France would soon recover the effects of her late drains, and would find an opportunity of regaining what the violence of foreigners might at present deprive her of. But, in any case," said these servile men, who ardently wished for peace, without daring to avow their wishes, "in any case, if His Imperial Majesty, who alone knew the real state of things, and was alone in a position to judge accurately—if His Imperial Majesty was inclined to accept the proposal of the ancient frontiers, the Council was of opinion that His Majesty might do so without detriment to his honour, for his true honour was the interest of France, and the interest of France was immediate peace."

Certainly the interest of France was peace, but it was her interest a year, two years, six years earlier; and that would have been the time to say so. To continue the war now involved danger only to the reigning dynasty; France, under the Bourbons, would be neither smaller nor less influential than the plenipotentiaries at Châtillon wished to render her; it is even certain that the dread of Napoleon influenced the Allies very much in their desire to weaken France; were she under the Bourbons they would be much less solicitous to reduce her natural and secular power. Things having arrived at the point, at which they were, there was no danger in risking a few battles more, which might lead to a settlement whose conditions would be a compromise between the ancient and modern frontiers, by which we might secure Mayence by sacrificing Antwerp. One man alone, whose name deserves mention—M. de Cessac—recorded his vote against accepting the Châtillon propositions. With this single exception, all the members of the Council of Regency exhibited an unprecedented subservience. The most daring expressed in a more decided tone the same cowardly feeling. "Peace or war as the Emperor pleases." Such was their sole opinion, but it signified that, if by chance the Emperor should prefer war, it was what they, too, desired.*

Napoleon had always manifested extreme contempt for those large assemblies where questions of war or politics are debated, because in reality those whom he met in such places were men fashioned by despotism—the greater number having no opinion of their own, very few amongst them capable of forming one, and these endeavouring to discover the wishes of the ruler as a guide to theirs; others were contradictions either through bad temper or discontent. This council, had Napoleon been present, would have justified his opinion, and revealed the effects of the *régime* under which he had pressed down France, and under which he was about to sink himself. As to the rest, he would be very much disappointed, for he had wished to excite a burst of patriotic indignation, and he received, on the contrary, an humble and trembling supplication for peace, a suppli-

* The report of this Council is still extant with the recorded opinion of each member; and, should it ever be published, it will be seen that I have not exaggerated in any particular.

cation written under the influence of two sources of fear—fear of him, and fear of the enemy.

But the humility that these advisers testified in presence of his wife, his brother, and his faithful chancellor Cambacérès, was flung aside when they no longer found themselves confronted by these formidable witnesses—they then gave vent to very different language. Their submission to Napoleon's wishes was suddenly transformed into fury against his obstinacy. "*This man is mad,*" was the expression echoed on every side. "He will get us all killed," said men that had never appeared on a battle-field. Amongst the men particularly attached to Joseph—and these, generally speaking, were the civil or military *employés* who had sought at Madrid the advancement they could not find at Paris—it was insinuated that it would be better to place in Joseph's hands the power of saving France. These friends of Joseph, very ill-treated by Napoleon, who accused them of causing our misfortunes in Spain, now repaid his ill-treatment with disparaging remarks, and said it would be better to proclaim a regency, of which Joseph should be president, for with him Europe would be more willing to treat than with Napoleon. They asserted this to be an adroit manner of soothing the pride of the allied sovereigns as well as of Napoleon himself, and of delivering France from the rule of a man whose genius was only suited to war, and confiding her destinies to one whose genius was essentially that of peace. This was a plainly-spoken wish that Napoleon should abdicate and Joseph take his place. But it was only the most rash—that is to say, the most discontented, who dared to hold this language. Those who confined themselves to wishing that a speedy termination should be put to the war, and had no idea of subverting the throne, contented themselves with saying that, in reply to the debate provoked by Napoleon, it would be right to send him an address containing a formal demand for peace.

These sentiments obtained so much, that Joseph, adopting the opinions of those who wished to facilitate peace on Napoleon's part, by making pacific demonstrations, thought proper to consult M. Meneval, whose fidelity was unalterable, and commissioned him to write to head quarters to know whether a peace movement would be agreeable to the Emperor, and in what form he would wish it to be made. M. Meneval declared that he would inform the Emperor correctly of everything that occurred, and would afterwards listen to what it was lawful for him to hear. He therefore wrote immediately to Napoleon, with the delicate reserve which he was capable of, combined with the most perfect frankness.

Napoleon, on arriving at Reims, found M. Meneval's letter, and several others, that gave him a clear idea of the state of affairs. Thanks to his wondrous sagacity, which distrust heightened but did not confuse; he guessed everything; perhaps that in the first moment of excitement, he exaggerated a little what he divined. He was especially displeased because the Duke de Rovigo, not wishing

to compromise anyone, and not attaching much importance to the opinions of those who surrounded Joseph, had sent him no report of what had occurred. With the promptitude and utter want of discretion, that too often characterised his manner of acting, he wrote the following letter to the Duke de Rovigo. In this document we find only evidences of a dreary despotism, nor would it deserve to be quoted did it not, at the same time, exhibit an inflexibility of character very extraordinary under the circumstances.

"To the Minister of Police.

"Reims, 14th March, 1814.

"You do not inform me of anything that is going on at Paris. People there talk of an address, of a regency, and lay a thousand plots as stupid as absurd, and which could only be conceived by a fool like Miot. These people do not know that I, like Alexander, cut the Gordian knot. Let them know that I am still the same man that I was at Wagram, and at Austerlitz; that I do not wish for state intrigues; that there is no authority but mine, and should events become pressing, it is the Empress-Regent who alone possesses my confidence. The king (Joseph) is weak-minded, and allows himself to be seduced into intrigues that may prove fatal to the State, and above all, to him and his advisers, if he do not quickly return to the right path. I am displeased at learning all this from another source than from you. Be assured that had an address been drawn up, opposed to the governing authority, I would have had the king, my ministers, and all who signed it arrested. These men spoil the National Guard; they spoil the Parisians, because they are themselves weak-minded, and do not understand the temper of the country. I want no tribunes of the people. Let the people not forget that I am the great tribune; they will then do what is conducive to their real interests, which are the constant object of my thoughts."

After this vexatious experience of the men that surrounded him, Napoleon took upon himself to reply to the plenipotentiaries at Châtillon. He had already commanded M. de Caulaincourt to use every means to prolong the negotiations and prevent a rupture, without, however, conceding the proposed bases. The question still was of the counter-project, required within a fixed time, and which Napoleon without actually refusing, felt extreme repugnance to present. He renewed his instructions this time, in terms as prudent as honourable.

"Ask," he wrote to M. de Caulaincourt, "whether the proposed preliminaries, to which you are requested to present a counter-project, are the *dernier mot* of the allies. If it is so you break off immediately, whatever may be the consequence, and we shall tell France to what the allies have tried to subject us. If, on the contrary, as is very probable, you are told, it is not their *dernier mot*, you will reply that we on our side, referring incessantly to the Frankfort bases, have not uttered our *dernier mot*, but they cannot

require that we should offer in a counter-project, the sacrifices they wish to force from us; for," he added, "*if they wish to flog us they will not, at least, oblige us to lay on the whip ourselves.*"

Napoleon wished that M. de Caulaincourt, by entering into a discussion of details, should learn precisely what it would be necessary to sacrifice and what it would be still possible to retain; for the disadvantage of offering a counter-project was, that in our ignorance of the definite intentions of the allies on each point, we might yield what it was possible for us to keep. He authorised M. de Caulaincourt to abandon in the first instance Dutch Brabant, that is to say, the part of Holland of which, in 1810, he had deprived his brother Louis. This was a very slight concession, for the frontier, extending from the Wahal to the Meuse, was what was called the natural frontier, or the *Frankfort bases*, and secured to us the Scheld and Antwerp. Napoleon also authorised his plenipotentiary to renounce the different spots of territory we possessed on the right bank of the Rhine, as annexations of the left bank, such as Wesel, Cassel, and Kehl. We thus, though keeping possession of the left, abandoned the bridges that secured us a facility of landing on the right bank. Napoleon also consented to demolish the fortifications of Mayence and reduce the place to a mere commercial town. He was willing to resign all that France possessed beyond the Alps and all the states governed by his brothers, either in Germany or in Italy, without requiring any compensation except for Prince Eugene. The sacrifice of Spain had been long since made; Napoleon again formally renounced that kingdom, and as to our colonies, he authorised M. de Caulaincourt to declare that France would yield some of her factories in India (those that we still possess) without the isles of France and Réunion; she would give up Guadeloupe, but not the Saintes; she would resign Martinique, but not her other possessions in the Antilles. These were all of so little value that Napoleon was willing to abandon them, if he could retain some continental possessions. He ought to have said "France prefers free trade with the colonies of every other nation that have been independent, or are about to become so, to possessions in the new world, that are at the same time valueless and difficult to defend." Should M. de Caulaincourt not succeed in getting each point discussed, he was to draw up a counter-project on these bases, and await the reply, whatever it might be.

These instructions, which had already been despatched from Craonne and renewed at Reims, with a little additional latitude, but without exceeding what we have just reported, were only a reproduction of the Frankfort bases, and could not prolong the negotiations beyond a few days. M. de Caulaincourt was deeply afflicted on receiving these instructions, for, though he loved his country as a good citizen, he also loved and wished to save the ruling dynasty, even at the expense to Napoleon's personal glory, a diminution of which he looked upon as an inevitable and deserved

punishment for his faults. But, bound by absolute orders, having exhausted every pretext he could devise to defer the fatal term some days beyond the 10th March, he was at length obliged to explain himself. He did so; but, when in an elaborate note, which he attempted to read to the plenipotentiaries, he undertook to discuss the preliminaries presented on the 17th February, and to prove that they were a violation of a positive treaty, for the Frankfort bases formally proposed, had been accepted with equal formality; that the frontiers, to which the Allies now wished to limit France, deprived her of the relative power which she ought to retain, in order to maintain the balance of power in Europe; that the possession of the left bank of the Rhine was scarcely a sufficient compensation to her for the partition of Poland, the secularization of the ecclesiastical States, the destruction of the republic of Venice, and the conquests of the English in India; when, we say, he undertook to expatiate on these considerations, seven or eight of the plenipotentiaries present raised a simultaneous outcry, threatened to break up the meeting, and hear nothing further if the present plenipotentiary persisted to dilate on such a theme. It was, they said, a counter-project that the Duke de Vicence was to present, and not a critique; it was a counter-project he had promised, and for which they had patiently waited a month—which they were commissioned to demand, with orders to leave off if they did not obtain it.

M. de Caulaincourt did all in his power to calm and induce them to accept his note. He only succeeded, after enduring the most bitter recriminations, and on promising to present a counter-project, and that within twenty-four hours.

Effectively, on the 15th, M. de Caulaincourt presented a counter-project, conformable to the bases we have quoted. After enumerating the sacrifices we were ready to make, in a manner calculated to make the most of our concessions—such, for example, as the surrender of Westphalia, Holland, Illyria, Italy, and Spain—the document further stated that France consented that Holland should be restored to a prince of the House of Orange, with an increase of territory; (this increase was no other than the restitution of Dutch Brabant;) that Germany should be organized in the manner already proposed by the plenipotentiaries—*that is to say, the states should be rendered independent and united by a federal bond*—Italy, too, was to be free, with the exception that Austria was to hold possessions there, whilst France would retire to the Alps, it being always understood that Prince Eugene and the Princess Eliza were to be allowed an apanage; lastly, that the Pope was to return to Rome, and Ferdinand VII. to Madrid. France was also willing that England should keep Malta and the greater part of her acquisitions. But this detailed enumeration of the concessions made by France naturally implied that she intended to keep the Rhine and the Alps—that is to say, Antwerp, Cologne, Mayence, Chambéry and Nice, as she did not expressly say she was willing to give them up.

On this occasion M. de Caulaincourt was not interrupted by the

plenipotentiaries, for he had fulfilled the condition of presenting a counter-project; he was listened to in frigid silence, but without any expression of astonishment. Scarcely was the reading of the document finished when the plenipotentiaries rose, and, after formally acknowledging the presentation of our counter-project, announced they were about to send it to the head-quarters of the allied sovereigns; they also announced that the negotiations might be now looked upon as definitively broken off, and that within forty-eight hours they would leave Châtillon. The English, and especially Lord Aberdeen, who, during the entire proceedings, had always observed the strictest politeness, assured M. de Caulaincourt that they deeply regretted not being able to conclude peace on the conditions they had proposed, which would have prevented the effusion of blood, to which they could now see no end; that on these conditions they would have treated honestly with Napoleon, that they would even have recognised him as Emperor, which England had not yet done. These declarations, which bore the stamp of perfect sincerity, profoundly affected M. de Caulaincourt, who, not having been able to secure the grandeur of the empire, had wished at least to save the empire itself. This illustrious citizen, who had represented France after Jena and Friedland, and had been loaded with the caresses of trembling Europe, was, in his present grief, which he could not conceal, a striking example of the fickleness of fortune, an example which the plenipotentiaries ought to have looked upon with lively fear. But diplomatists are not more philosophic than other men—the present intoxicates them, so that they forget the past and the future!

The counter-project, presented on the 15th March, was to be answered at latest within two days—that is to say, on the 17th—and the Congress was to be dissolved on the 18th. M. de Caulaincourt sent the reply immediately to Napoleon at Reims.

Napoleon had anticipated this, and had taken his resolution. Having arrived at Reims on the evening of the 13th, he resolved to pass the 14th, 15th, 16th, and perhaps the 17th, there, in order to allow his troops some repose, and to fuse some into certain corps organized too hastily at Paris, and to take cognizance of the proceedings of the Allies before definitely determining on his own. Though his second movement against the army of Silesia had not been as successful as the first, though he had been deceived in his hopes by the loss of Soissons, and by the result of the battles of Craonne and Laon, still Blucher had been severely chastised, and Prince Schwarzenberg, though he had come from the Aube to the Seine, had not dared to advance beyond Nogent. This prince seemed to hesitate to take another step until Napoleon should have more fully revealed his designs. At length the battle of Reims, a small indemnification for the most bitter disappointments had, however, produced a most strong impression on the Allies. Napoleon did not, therefore, consider himself conquered, and he still waited

some false move on the part of his adversaries, to rush upon them with the rapidity of lightning.

The plan which he still preferred to any other was to advance towards the fortresses, collect the garrisons, and intercept the enemy's lines of communication. He was much encouraged to pursue this plan by the arrival at Reims of General Janssens, with five or six thousand men, drawn from the fortresses of the Ardennes, who, combined into a compact corps, had scathlessly traversed the invaded provinces. Napoleon had already, as we have seen, ordered General Maison to withdraw from Lille, Valenciennes, and Mons, in fact from all the Belgic fortresses, whatever troops were not indispensably necessary to guard the walls during a few days; of these he was to form a small army and join the troops coming from Antwerp. He ordered Carnot, who still held the English in check before Antwerp, to keep with him only the Marines, and the most recently organized battalions, and to send his best men, to the number of about six thousand, to General Maison. He had ordered General Merle to leave Maestricht and the fortresses on the Meuse; he commanded Generals Durutte and Morand to leave Metz and Mayence (orders that had been received and were about being executed); in this manner he reckoned on being able to draw from the fortresses, from Antwerp to Mayence, about fifty thousand men. He had no need to go to Mayence or to Metz to collect these diverse detachments; a simple movement on the upper Marne, through Châlons, Vitry, and Joinville—a movement that would not draw him far from the circle of his operations—would enable him to collect this reinforcement, and, joined to the troops he already had between the Seine and the Marne, would raise his army to one hundred thousand men, and, besides, place him in the rear of his enemies, which was the most certain way to draw them to a distance from Paris. To this great design there were, however, two important objections—the want of defensive works round Paris, and the moral condition of this great city. Napoleon, as we have said, had, through fear of alarming the population, deferred to the last moment the erection of the necessary works. Around the capital of France, where now rise eleven or twelve leagues of walls and sixteen citadels, there were not even earthen redoubts. Some palisaded batteries in front of the gates were the only works that had been erected. Twelve thousand men of the National Guards, selected amongst the most peaceful and least stirring citizens, and fifteen or twenty thousand men from the depôts, with a numerous artillery force, composed the garrison. These forces, headed by an energetic commander, would have been sufficient to resist the enemy for some days, especially if the inhabitants of the suburbs could have been supplied with muskets. But the moral state of the capital presented the great difficulties of the defence. The inhabitants, divided between hatred for foreigners and detestation of a despotism, which, after twenty years of victory,

now brought armed Europe before the gates of the capital, were ready to side with the first occupant, and a party of clever malcontents could, as soon as the enemy appeared, become the active instruments of a revolution, already effected in the minds of the people. This was the weak point of the empire, more dangerous than that created by an almost annihilated military power. Had Napoleon been a legitimate prince, that is to say the descendant of an ancient dynasty, or a wise prince, who had preserved the confidence of the country, he might have seen the enemy enter Paris, as Frederick the Great had beheld a similar event in Berlin, without being involved in irreparable misfortune. For him, on the contrary, the entrance of foreigners into his capital, facilitated by the want of defensive works, was not a military reverse, but the almost certain cause of a revolution.

These were undoubtedly grave objections against any plan that involved Napoleon's further removal from Paris, but the system of fighting alternately against Blucher and Schwarzenberg, in the angle formed by the Seine and the Marne, having become almost impracticable—firstly, because the enemy was too clearly aware of the design; and, secondly, because Napoleon having retired to the extremity of the angle, the two adverse armies in approaching him would be fused into one—a change of tactics was therefore absolutely necessary, and no plan was better than that which, increasing his army by 50,000 men, placed him in the rear of the enemy. Having no choice, Napoleon tried to persuade himself that the political danger was not so great; that the Parisians would not dare to throw off his authority; and, besides, having his brothers at their head, they would be able to defend themselves. He did not picture to himself then, because he had not experienced it, how great is the irresolution and weakness of the public mind, when a government is morally undermined, and its popularity departed. Whether through necessity, or blinded by self-illusion, he adopted the project, so admirably planned in a military sense, of marching towards the fortresses; to secure the success of this plan, it was only necessary that Paris should hold out five or six days.

However, before commencing this daring manœuvre, Napoleon wished to give a few days' rest to his troops, to make some indispensable arrangements, and see whether he could not, before withdrawing still further from Paris, fall on the rear of one of the invading armies, that of Bohemia for example, which, having taken up a position at Nogent, already presented a flank towards him. It was thus the four days passed at Reims, from the 14th to the 17th March, had been employed. He had left General Charpentier at Soissons, with some *débris*, sufficient to defend the place; he had re-organized, by fusing them together, the four divisions of the Young Guard, composing the corps of Victor and Ney; he had ordered to be sent from Paris, under the conduct of Lefebvre-Desnoëttes, about three or four thousand of the Young Guard, two thousand mounted horse soldiers of the same corps, the miserable

remnant of the Polish troops, a new reserve division composed of National Guards drilled in the depôts, and lastly an immense park of artillery. This reinforcement would supply him with 12,000 additional men. He had already received nearly 6,000 from the fortresses of the Ardennes, under General Janssens, and with these different reinforcements, it would be possible for him to raise his army to 60,000 men. If to these he joined the corps of Macdonald, D'Oudinot, and Gérard, he would have 85,000 combatants under his command; and the number would be increased to 135,000, should his march towards the fortresses be as successful as he hoped.

The repose accorded to his troops having appeared to him sufficient, and his arrangements being completed, he resolved to leave Reims on the morning of the 17th, and repair to Epernay, in order to judge better of what he ought to do under existing circumstances. Paris had two causes of alarm; the renewed approach of Prince Schwarzenberg, whose vanguard had reached Provens, and what had befallen the army of Spain, between Bayonne and Bordeaux. Posted on the banks of the Marne at Epernay, Napoleon would see whether it would be better to fall immediately on Prince Schwarzenberg's rear, and arrest his advance towards the capital, or persevere in the project of marching towards the fortresses. His arrangements were made the evening before with a view to these two objects, for whilst bringing up the mass of his forces on Epernay, he sent Ney with the infantry of the Young Guard to Châlons. If he wished to advance on the fortresses, he had only to direct his corps to follow Ney in the direction of Châlons, or, on the contrary, to make them fall back towards Fère-Champenoise, if he decided on attacking Prince Schwarzenberg. Ney, who was in the van, would not have a greater distance to march to Fère Champenoise, whether he went there from Châlons or from Epernay.

Having left Reims on the morning of the 17th, Napoleon reached Epernay the same evening. He left Mortier at Reims, to second Marmont in the defence of Berry-au-Bac, and gave both an injunction to hold Blucher in check for some days, by successively disputing the passages of the Aisne and the Marne. When Napoleon reached Epernay, he learned that Prince Schwarzenberg had advanced far beyond the Seine. The latter was now so far advanced in the direction of Paris, that to fall upon his rear seemed a well-directed *coup-de-main*, as important as that of Montmirail, and politically necessary on account of the consternation prevailing in the capital. In fact, the Parisians were calling aloud for Napoleon, for they could not behold foreign bayonets approaching their gates without invoking the aid of his arm. The events at Bayonne and Bordeaux had added to the terror of the Parisians. These events, very serious, as we shall soon see, had inspired the enemies of the government with enthusiastic hopes which ought to be immediately crushed. Napoleon, influenced by these motives, did not hesitate to set out for Fère-Champenoise in order to pass from the Marne

to the Seine. On the morning of the 18th, the entire army marched in that direction.

Before following the Emperor in this new series of operations, we shall briefly retrace the events that had just occurred on the Spanish frontiers, and which had so powerfully disturbed the public mind. Marshal Soult had continued to occupy the Adour with his right wing, and the *Gave d' Oleron* with his centre and left, whilst Lord Wellington had not yet made up his mind to move forward. But the English General having received the means of satisfying the wants of the Spaniards, had commenced offensive operations with eight English, two Portuguese, and four Spanish divisions. He ordered two English and two Spanish divisions to blockade Bayonne, then with the remainder, about sixty thousand men, he marched against Marshal Soult, who had abandoned the *Gave d' Oleron*, and had taken up a position at the *Gave de Pau*, in the neighbourhood of Orthez.

Marshal Soult, after having left an entire division at Bayonne (independent of the garrison), after having sent Napoleon two infantry divisions and several cavalry brigades, had still six divisionsof infantry and one of cavalry, amounting in all to 40,000 veteran soldiers. If this number was not sufficient to secure a victory, which might be more difficult as the English were present, it was at least sufficient to dispute the country inch by inch, and cover Bordeaux. Bordeaux was at this moment the capital of the south. There prevailed there, besides the discontent peculiar to maritime cities whose commerce had been cut off, during twenty years, a religious and royalist spirit, common to all the southern provinces; so that every sentiment most opposed to the Imperial régime, obtained at Bordeaux. The Duke d'Angoulême, son of the Count Artois and nephew of Louis XVIII., had hastened to the Spanish frontier, but had not been received by Lord Wellington, thanks to the care taken by the English, to deprive this war of all appearance of a dynastic question. But he hovered in the rear of the head-quarters, and his appearance caused an extraordinary agitation in the country, a feeling not exhibited in Franche-Comté and in Lorraine, where the arrival of the Count d' Artois had not produced any sensation. Numerous Royalist emissaries had already appeared at Bordeaux, and a single movement of the enemy would suffice to produce an explosion.

These were the causes that had decided Napoleon to leave so large a portion of his troops between Bayonne and Bordeaux, and which ought to have induced, on the part of his lieutenant, the most energetic efforts to stop the progress of the English army. On this account, Napoleon had frequently recommended Marshal Soult to display the greatest vigour, and do as he was doing—that is to say, to be the first and last under fire; for when he required unlimited devotedness from his troops, the best means of obtaining it was to give the example.

On the 26th February, Marshal Soult took up his position a little in the rear of Orthez, on the heights that border the Gave de Pau,

having on his right General Reille, in the centre Count d'Erlon, and on the left, at Orthez, General Clausel, each with two divisions. The latter covered the route of Sault de Navailles. The cavalry watched the banks of the Gave. Each wing was drawn up in two lines, the second ready to support the first.

On the morning of the 27th February, Lord Wellington passed the Gave, and attacked with five English divisions the French right wing, commanded by General Reille; whilst at the opposite extremity, General Hill, with an English division, and some Portuguese and Spanish troops, attacked General Clausel at Orthez. The contest was long and violent, and General Reille on the right, as General Clausel on the left wing, worthily sustained the honour of our arms. General Clausel had maintained his position at Orthez without yielding an inch; and General Reille, obliged to fall back upon a second position, was, nevertheless, certain of being able to keep his place if, by a vigorous use of the second lines, the battle was recommenced against an enemy visibly exhausted. The French might, it is true, be conquered after this new effort, as our sole reserve consisted, besides the divisions engaged, of General Paris' brigade, composed of the residue of all the other corps. It might also happen that the French would conquer, and in that case the result would be important. These are questions whose solution depends on temperament, for the mind becomes confused in the consideration. Marshal Soult, considering that this was the only army that remained in the south of the empire, had thought it wiser to retire, and had effected his retreat on Sault de Navailles, after having killed or wounded 6,000 of Lord Wellington's troops, and left three or four thousand on the field of battle. The French had retired in admirable order, and inspired the enemy with a feeling of profound respect.

But Soult had abandoned valuable territory, and that, too, at the close of a day which, without being a lost battle, would have all the appearances of one; for the enemy would be authorised to call it so, as it enabled them to advance, and because the ill-disposed populations of the South would give it no other designation. After this battle of Orthez, there was not a point where the French could rest until they reached the Garonne. Bordeaux would be left unprotected, and the great political interests to which Napoleon had sacrificed 40,000 men—who, had they been brought up to the Seine, might have saved the Empire—was about to be compromised. There was only one resource; it was that Marshal Soult should make Bordeaux the basis of his operations, and the terminus of his retreat. He would, in this case, be obliged to fight another battle at the risk of being beaten; and afterwards, beaten or not, he would be obliged to fall back on Bordeaux, establish a vast camp around this city, and defend himself as General Carnot was doing at Antwerp. It is true that Bordeaux had not the walls of Antwerp; but it had better—it had a noble army that, making this city the base of operation, ought to be invincible. Should Soult's

army only hold its position fifteen or twenty days, it would be sufficient to give Napoleon time to decide the fate of the war between Paris and Langres.

Marshal Soult, fearing encounters with the English, which had always been unfortunate, (thanks, it must be said, to our generals and not to our soldiers,) had thought proper to manœuvre, and, instead of covering Bordeaux directly, to go up towards Toulouse, thinking that the English would not dare to advance on Bordeaux whilst he was on their flanks and rear. Such calculations, very rational on the part of Napoleon, of whom the enemy was afraid, were not so well suited to his lieutenants, who were far from inspiring the same amount of alarm. Events soon proved this. In fact, Lord Wellington, who, by summoning to him a portion of the troops stationed round Bayonne, had under his command more than seventy thousand men, despatched ten or twelve thousand towards Bordeaux, a sufficient number to incite insurrection in that city, and kept sixty thousand men to pursue Marshal Soult in the direction of Toulouse. This he did not fail to do. Whilst Marshal Soult took the road to Tarbes, Lord Wellington despatched Marshal Beresford from Mont-de-Marson, with a column of English and Portuguese troops, and the latter, finding Bordeaux defenceless, on the 12th March, the General and the Prefect, who had at most twelve hundred men under their command, retired to the Dordogne, and the royalists of Bordeaux, seconded by the merchants, who were impatient for the re-establishment of commerce, called aloud for the restoration of the Bourbons. The Duke d'Angoulême hastened to the city, and the restoration of the ancient dynasty was proclaimed in presence of the English, who did nothing, hindered nothing; contenting themselves with repeating that the home government of France did not touch them, that they had only one mission—to provide the means of subsistence for their troops and guarantee the safety of those amongst the inhabitants who trusted to their honour. Count Lynch, (the Mayor of Bordeaux,) putting himself at the head of the movement, made a proclamation in which he announced the re-establishment of the Bourbons, and seemed to say it was for the purpose of restoring her legitimate princes to France that the allied powers had taken arms. Lord Wellington, following his instructions as closely as though they were a military watchword, wrote to the Duke d'Angoulême to protest against the Mayor of Bordeaux's proclamation, and to declare that the overthrow of one dynasty or the re-establishment of another was not, by any means, the object of the allied powers, a fact which he would himself be obliged to explain before the public, if the Bourbons did not retract the assertions they had ventured to make.

This was carrying a respect for appearances too far, when in reality the Allies did desire what the Mayor of Bordeaux had announced. However this may be, it was not less true that the enemy, taking advantage of a false move of Marshal Soult, had entered

Bordeaux, which had been left unprotected, and furnished the Royalists a favourable opportunity of proclaiming the restoration of the Bourbons in the south of France. The example was one of serious import and might provoke imitation. It seems to us, who can reason calmly fifty years after the event, that this ought to have been enough to determine Napoleon not to quit the vicinity of Paris. But, besides that Napoleon did not know to what point he had alienated the hearts of the people by his system of continual war, he was over-ruled and rendered powerless by the impossibility of long disputing the possession of Paris outside the walls, and the necessity of going to seek his last resources on the frontiers. But, even before executing this movement, he resolved, as we have just seen, to make a violent attack on Prince Schwarzenberg's flank, in order to draw the Austrian general towards him, or at least retard his march on the capital. This was the cause of Napoleon's sending his troops in the direction of Fère-Champenoise. He arrived there on the evening of the 18th, and on the way, the cavalry of the Guard, falling in with Kaisarow's Cossack's, cut them in pieces and threw them back on the Seine. They bivouaced at Fère-Champenoise and in the neighbourhood.

The next day, the 19th, Napoleon, after deliberating whether he would march on Arcis or Plancy, advanced towards this latter point, because all reports concurred in representing Prince Schwarzenberg as already arrived at Provins, and Napoleon thought that by drawing nearer to Provins he would have a better chance of finding himself in the midst of the scattered columns of the army of Bohemia.

But in reasoning thus, Napoleon was not fully aware of the last movements of the enemy. Encouraged by the results of Craonne and Laon, Prince Schwarzenberg had at first sent on a van-guard as far as Provins, without having determined to attempt anything decisive, for besides his customary prudence, he was restrained by a fit of gout. But no sooner was he informed of the battle of Reims, than he dreaded some fresh enterprise on Napoleon's part, and hastily returned to Nogent. Besides, the Emperor Alexander, uneasy at learning there were fresh troops at Châlons (Ney's troops had been seen advancing towards this city), began to fear that Napoleon, turning from Châlons on Arcis, might attack the mass of the allied armies in the rear, and hastened from Troyes to communicate his fears to Prince Schwarzenberg, whose head-quarters were between Nogent and Méry. The Austrian Generalissimo, generally less daring in his projects than the Emperor Alexander, was also less easily disturbed, and without being so persuaded as the Russian monarch of the imminence of the danger, recalled his too-scattered troops to Troyes on the 18th, with the intention of concentrating them at Bar-sur-Aube, in order that he might not remain exposed to a flank movement of his formidable adversary.

Thus on the 19th, whilst Napoleon at the head of his cavalry was advancing in full gallop on Plancy, Marshal de Wrède, who had

been left to guard the Aube and the Seine, between Arcis, Plancy, and Anglure, was retreating to Arcis, Wittgenstein's corps (now called Rajeffsky's), those of Prince de Wurtemberg and General Guilay, were falling back on Troyes, and the reserves, under Barclay de Tolly were being concentered between Brienne and Troyes.

Napoleon, in debouching by Plancy, had gone a little too much to the right, that is to say, a little too much towards Paris, and was soon convinced of his mistake in seeing the retrograde march of the different columns of the army of Bohemia. Nevertheless, knowing by experience that by throwing himself boldly into the midst of the retreating troops there was greater probability of gaining great advantages than of encountering strong resistance, he unhesitatingly crossed the bridge of Plancy, with the cavalry of the guard, and, after passing the Aube, advanced on the Seine. He left General Sebastiani, with the Colbert and Exelmans divisions on his left, to observe the enemy in the direction of Arcis, and with Letort's cavalry of the Old Guard he proceeded directly to the bridge of Méry, on the Seine. Méry, being occupied by the enemy, Letort crossed the Seine at a ford higher up, and fell on Prince de Wurtemberg's rear-guard. He sabred some hundreds, and effected a capture of great value, that of a pontoon train, belonging to the army of Bohemia. If Napoleon had been in possession of this instrument of war a month earlier, he might possibly have freed himself from all his enemies. A pontoon train had been sent him from Paris, but so cumbrous as to be useless. He was, therefore, delighted to get possession of a well-constructed portable bridge, light and easy of transportation. After this daring reconnaissance, Napoleon left Letort in the direction of Méry, with orders to pursue the retreating columns of the enemy, recrossed the Seine in person, and slept at Plancy, on the Aube.

This day the relative position of the armies was rendered clear. Prince Schwarzenberg was retiring in great haste, through the mere fear of finding the French army on his right flank: what would his alarm be did he suppose the Emperor in his rear? The Paris route was now freed from the presence of the enemy, and Napoleon resolved to profit of this, as well as of the small amount of firmness displayed by Prince Schwarzenberg, to resume the execution of his project of advancing on the fortresses, collecting the garrisons, and, having thus doubled his forces, take a position in the rear of the enemy. It seemed a well-founded hypothesis that Prince Schwarzenberg, already retreating, would accellerate his pace, when Napoleon arrived at Vitry, at St. Dizier, at Toul, and at Nancy; and certainly Blucher would not advance when Schwarzenberg would be retreating*.

Consequently, Napoleon made the following arrangements. He ordered Marshals Oudinot and Macdonald, and General Gérard,

* I take these details from the correspondence of Napoleon, where we find retraced day by day, and hour by hour, his resolutions and his movements.

who were now freed from the presence of the enemy, to retrace their steps through Provins, Villenauxe, Anglure, and Plancy, and join him at Arcis by the right bank of the Aube. Ney, advancing to Arcis, along the same bank, would arrive there on the same day as the Young Guard, and Friant at the same time as the Old. Napoleon resolved to repair to Arcis himself, on the morning of the 20th, with the cavalry of the Guard, remounting the Aube by the left bank. After having rallied Ney, Friant, Oudinot, Macdonald, Gérard round Arcis, and gathered *en marche* some spoils of the enemy; after having received the *convois* sent from Paris under Lefebvre-Desnoëttes, he intended to advance straight from the Aube to the Marne, and go to Vitry, Saint Dizier, perhaps even to Bar-le-Duc. Marshals Mortier and Marmont, who had been left at Reims, and at Berry-au-Bac, could easily join him by Châlons, and Napoleon gave them orders to that effect. Every thing was ordered so that Napoleon was to advance on the fortresses with 70,000 men. Having made these arrangements, Napoleon wrote to Paris, saying what he was about to do; he recommended every one to preserve a cool self-possession, and exhibited great confidence himself. This confidence was partly affected and partly sincere, for he fully understood the skilfulness of his plans, and had little doubt of their success.

The next day—the 20th March—a day more than once memorable in the course of his life—Napoleon left Plancy to retrace his course along the left bank of the Aube, with a portion of his cavalry. Letort had left another portion round Méry, to seize baggage and prisoners. General Sebastiani with the Colbert and Exelman's divisions, had made the first move and advanced on Arcis. In his extreme confidence, Napoleon had not deigned to recross the Aube and advance under cover; he marched on Arcis by the same route he had traced for the different detachments of his cavalry.

Having arrived at Arcis about the middle of the day, (Arcis-sur-Aube) he found General Sebastiani very thoughtful, in consequence of what he had seen *en route*. Marshal Ney, who had just arrived with his infantry along the right bank of the Aube, appeared quite as anxious as General Sebastiani. Both, after having repulsed the Bavarian vanguards, thought they perceived between the Aube and the Seine—that is to say, between Arcis and Troyes—the entire army of Bohemia. If it were so, they had no time to lose in quitting Arcis, which is on the left bank of the Aube, and cross to the right, and put this river between them and the enemy. Though, by the union of all the troops ordered to repair to Arcis, the French would number 70,000—that is to say when Oudinot, Macdonald, Gérard, and Lefebvre would have arrived, and 84,000 at Vitry when Mortier and Marmont would have joined—still, at the actual moment, they did not amount to more than 20,000. There were 5,000 cavalry of the Guard; Ney brought from 9,000 to 10,000 infantry of the Young Guard, and Friant 5,000 to 6,000 of the Old. There were not sufficient to resist Prince Schwarzenberg's 90,000 soldiers, concentrated between Arcis and Troyes.

Napoleon, who had seen from Méry, Schwarzenberg's columns in retreat, could not imagine that this prince would think of halting between Troyes and Arcis, to risk a battle there. A slight reconnaissance made on the Troyes route by a young officer, confirmed his opinion, and induced him to post Ney's infantry in advance of Arcis, a little to the left, at Grand-Torcy's; he at the same time sent messengers along the other bank of the Aube, to hasten the arrival of his Old Guard and Lefebvre-Desnoëttes, whose approach was announced. The latter was bringing about 6,000 men. In this attitude, Napoleon resolved to await events, which could not fail to occur within a few hours. And effectively, affairs shortly assumed an alarming aspect.

Prince Schwarzenberg, though not rash, possessed the firmness of an old soldier, and after having made his principal corps fall back from Nogent on Troyes, he could not, with 90,000 men, retreat further before 30,000 or 40,000, the number he believed Napoleon to command. Besides, he was weary of the insinuations and continual boasting of the Prussians, and he wished to prove that he was as capable as they of encountering the terrible Emperor of the French. He therefore resolved to turn to the right, advance on Arcis, and accept battle if offered, and thus, prevent the French in any case, from falling on Troyes, and making fresh captures. With this view, he ordered the Bavarians to advance from his right on Arcis; he sent the Rajeffsky, Wurtemburg, and Guilay corps straight forward on Arcis, and connected these two masses by the guards and reserve corps. About two o'clock he found himself before Arcis.

General Sebastiani, piqued by some expressions of Napoleon, who had not treated his fears seriously, dashed along the Troyes route with a few squadrons, to ascertain more clearly what he thought he had seen the first time. The ground beyond Arcis, in the direction of Troyes, being deeply undulated, is capable of concealing great numbers of troops. General Sebastiani, having crossed the first risings of the ground, perceived the Bavarian and Austrian cavalry advancing *en masse*, and returned in full gallop to communicate the intelligence to Napoleon. The Colbert and Exelmans divisions were immediately ordered to take horse to oppose the enemy. General Kaisarow, at the head of several thousand cavalry, charged the Colbert division, which scarcely amounted to 700 or 800, and flung them back on the Exelmans division, that, overborne by the shock, was obliged to yield. All together, pursuers and pursued, arrived *pêle-mêle* at Arcis. Ney was on the left at Grand-Torcy, with the infantry of the Young Guard. Between Grand-Torcy and Arcis there were at most three or four battalions, amongst which was one Polish, commanded by Skrzynecki, the same who has since, in 1830, so nobly and bravely defended the interests of expiring Poland. This battalion had only time to form in square to receive Napoleon, and protect him from the threatening masses of the enemy. The Poles, proud of the precious deposit, defended by

theirbayonets, remained firm under a shower of shells and the repeated assaults of innumerable squadrons. But Napoleon did not long avail himself of the asylum he had found with the Poles. The first shock of the adverse cavalry being abated, Napoleon issued from the square, hurried towards Arcis, at the risk of being made prisoner, stopped, rallied his flying cavalry, and led them himself against the enemy. Our squadrons, into whom the presence of the Emperor infused new life, charged with the greatest vigour, and succeeded in restraining, without being able entirely to repulse, the superior numbers of the Bavarian and Austrian cavalry. During this time Ney, stationed in the Grand-Torcy, was preparing to make every effort to resist the army of Bohemia. The main object was to hold out till the Old Guard, whose columns were already visible on the other bank of the Aube, should have crossed that river and occupied Arcis. When the six thousand old soldiers composing this select troop should have arrived before Arcis, and joined Ney's ten thousand young soldiers, that were defending the Grand-Torcy, the French might be reassured. But these troops had not yet arrived.

Meanwhile, Ney sustained furious assaults at Torcy. Marshal de Wrède's corps had fallen into line, and his right, composed of Austrians, attacked Grand-Torcy, whilst he tried to throw his left, composed of Bavarians, between that village and the little city of Arcis. All the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian reserves, comprising the Guards, the Grenadiers, and the Cuirassiers, were engaged in this attack. We were opposed by more than forty thousand infantry, without reckoning hordes of cavalry.

Ney defended Grand-Torcy with his accustomed energy. His troops, stationed in the houses and behind the barricaded streets of the village, arrested, by a determined fire, the masses of Austrian infantry. Overpowered for a moment by numbers, he was driven from Grand-Torcy, but putting himself at the head of some battalions, and making a desperate charge with fixed bayonets, he re-entered the village and succeeded in keeping his position. Meanwhile, Napoleon, traversing incessantly the space between Arcis and Torcy, to encourage the troops by his presence, was, for a moment, in imminent danger of terminating his wondrous career. A bomb fell in front of a battalion of young soldiers, little accustomed to such a spectacle, and the men nearest to the flaming projectile drew back a step. Napoleon drove his horse straight to the bomb, to teach them contempt of danger. At this instant the bomb bursts, and he is wrapped in flames and smoke; the next moment, he issues from the fiery cloud in perfect safety—but his horse is wounded, and he throws himself on another, amid the enthusiastic cries of his young soldiers.

Thanks to these acts of heroic rashness, we kept our position. At length the Old Guard crosses the bridge of Arcis, under the conduct of the intrepid Friant. Napoleon in person drew them up before the town. The assistance was timely, for at this moment,

the Russian Guard, having fallen into line, came to the aid of Marshal de Wrède. A last attack, still more violent than the preceding, is attempted against Grand-Torcy. Ney displayed impenetrable firmness, and repulsed the assailants.

At the same time that this reinforcement of veteran infantry arrived so *a propos*, Lefebvre-Desnoëttes, who had left Paris to join the army, debouched by the bridge of Arcis, at the head of two thousand horse, with which he had preceded his infantry. General Sebastiani, now at the head of four thousand cavalry, deploys in the plain of Arcis, which ascends slightly towards the enemy's position. He is preparing to take revenge. His squadrons, charging fiercely, overthrow those of Kaisarow, drive them back on those of Frimont, and avenge the skirmish of the morning. But soon the Bavarian cavalry appears, together with the heavy Russian horse, and prudence counsels a retreat on Arcis. The day is now drawing to a close; Ney still keeps his position at Grand-Torcy, the Old Guard at Arcis, the cavalry placed between. The French have escaped the disaster which, had they displayed less energy, would certainly have befallen them. In fact, we had at first fought with 14,000 men against 40,000, then with 20,000 against 60,000, and lastly with 22,000 or 23,000 against 90,000, for on our right the corps of Giulay, Wurtemberg, and Rajeffski, had debouched from Nozay, and began to take part in the combat, when night separated the two armies.

At a distance on our right, an episode occurred which might have had disagreeable consequences, but for the rare valour of the cavalry of the Guard. We have said that the horse chasséurs and grenadiers had been left beyond the bridge of Méry, on the left of the Seine, with the booty captured on the previous evening, comprising the pontoon train. These troops having left Méry in the morning with this pontoon train, tried to join the main army by marching directly from Méry to Arcis, through Premier-Fait. They naturally fell into the midst of the cavalry corps of Rajeffsky, Giulay, and Wurtemberg, combined under the command of the Prince of Wurtemberg. Attacked by a force five or six times greater than theirs, they only escaped by displaying extraordinary valour, and fighting during several hours, sword in hand. Being at length joined by squadrons from the depôt at Versailles that had advanced by Méry, they fell back on Méry itself, with a loss of not more than a hundred horsemen, and, above all, without having sacrificed their pontoon train. The next day they reached Plancy, crossed the Aube, and joined the main body by the right bank of this river, with the corps of Oudinot, Macdonald, and Gérard, that were *en marche* from Provins to Arcis.

Such was the battle of Arcis-sur-Aube, the last that Napoleon fought in person during this campaign, and in which the soldiers as well as himself performed prodigies of valour. Napoleon believed himself victorious, and he believed it sincerely, for it was a miracle that 20,000 men had resisted forces that had successively increased from

40,000 to 90,000. He was proud of himself and his soldiers, and saw in this possibility of fighting forces so unequal, a guarantee of success to the end of the war. His confidence was now become so great that he was willing to encounter on the morrow all Prince Schwarzenberg's army. However, during the day, he could only be joined by Oudinot's corps, and adding to these what Lefevbre-Desnoëttes had brought, his forces would at most have numbered only 32,000 men. It would not therefore be prudent to brave the shock of 90,000 soldiers, especially with a river in his rear. He ultimately yielded to the dictates of reason and the advice of his marshals, who insisted that he should put the Aube between him and the enemy. After having kept his troops deployed before Arcis, whilst a second bridge was being constructed, he made them suddenly fall back through the streets of this little city, crossed the two bridges, and left Prince Schwarzenberg very much surprised and disappointed at seeing a prey escape that had almost seemed certain. The bridges of the Aube were broken down, and Marshal Oudinot took possession of the right bank with his corps, supported by a large body of artillery. The enemy, not wishing to allow the French army to escape undisturbed, determined to attempt the passage of the river, and remained during this attempt exposed to a destructive fire. Schwarzenberg lost unprofitably on this day—the 21st—more than a thousand men, for wherever he tried to cross the Aube, Oudinot's well-posted troops received him with a sustained fire of musketry and grape. It is not too much to say that these two days cost the army of Bohemia from 8,000 to 9,000 men, whilst our loss did not amount to more than 3,000, thanks to the smallness of our numbers and to the advantage of fighting under cover in a defended position.

Amidst these continual vicissitudes of war, Napoleon, finding his army ever heroic and devoted, though often discontented, still confiding in his genius, and with increased faith in the excellence of his tactics, he was far from despairing of his cause, though he did not deceive himself as to his political position. Though he would not acknowledge, even to himself, to how great a degree he had alienated the affections of the people, by his continual wars and his arbitrary government, still he was not blinded to the moral condition of France. Even on the field of Arcis, and amid the roar of battle, conversing with General Sebastiani, a Corsican like himself, and endowed with great political talents;—"Well General," asked the Emperor, "what is your opinion of what you see? "I say," replied the General, "that your Majesty has, of course, other resources, of which we know nothing." "What you have before your eyes," answered Napoleon, "and nothing more." "But in that case, why does not your Majesty call upon the people to rise?" "Chimeras," replied Napoleon, "borrowed from recollections of Spain and the French Revolution! Call upon the people to rise in a country where the Revolution has destroyed the nobles and the priests, and where I have destroyed the Revolution!"

The General remained astounded, admiring this coolness and profundity of thought, and asking himself how genius so vast had not prevented the commission of errors so flagrant.

But the moment was now come to form a definite resolution. Between Arcis and Châlons, the Aube and the Marne are only separated by a distance of eleven or twelve leagues. Marmont and Mortier, who had been sent to keep Blucher in check, might delay, but could not arrest his progress. The armies of Bohemia and Silesia must soon be united, and then the French troops would be stifled in their grasp. Napoleon, not being able with the forces under his command, to beat either of the allied generals separately, unless fortune afforded him favours, which of late she had seldom granted, still less could he defeat them, if combined. To carry out his idea of marching on the garrisons, and so procuring a reinforcement of fifty thousand men and draw the enemy further from Paris, was now his only remaining resource, a resource that, hazardous for him, would have been fatal to another.

He determined to set out on the 21st March for Vitry-on-the-Marne. Taking the route of Summepins, he could traverse the distance between Arcis and Vitry in two days. From Vitry he could easily reach Bar-le-Duc, and without advancing a step further, he could be joined by the garrisons of Metz, Mayence, Luxembourg, Thionville, Verdun, and Strasbourg, to the number of more than 30,000 men. If Napoleon went as far as Metz—a journey he might accomplish in three days, he could, in manœuvring round that place, raise Lorraine, Alsace, Franche-Comté, and receive from the Low Countries 15,000 additional men. He would, in this case, find himself at Metz, at the head of 120,000 soldiers, in the midst of provinces in arms against the enemy; and if Marshal Suchet, who had replaced Augereau—collecting all the troops he could on his way—returned to Besançon with 40,000 men, the aspect of things would certainly undergo a change.

Napoleon sent to Paris an account of the plan he had adopted, and ordered that all the artillery, battalions of the Young Guard, and battalions drawn from the depôts, that were not absolutely indispensable to the defence of the capital, should be sent to him. He begged the Parisians not to be disturbed, should the enemy again approach the city, as he said their appearance there could only be for two or three days, for the Allies would pursue him when they learned that he was about to cut off their lines of communication. Having renewed his orders to Marmont and Mortier, to join him at the Marne by Châlons, he set out for Vitry. He had formerly never quitted the Seine, without stationing considerable forces from Nogent to Montereau. It was not so this time, for he was obliged to execute *en masse* his projected diversion on the rear of the enemy; and it was by this movement alone he hoped to save Paris. 20,000 men, stationed between Nogent and Paris, would not have stopped Prince Schwarzenberg's progress, and their absence might frustrate the success of Napoleon's operations. Still,

believing it important to guard the bridges of the Seine, and thinking it possible to check the enemy at these points for some hours, —a delay which, under certain circumstances, was not to be despised —he left General Souham with a melange of National Guards and hastily-organized battalions, to defend Nogent, Bray and Montereau. General Alix, who, with forces of the same character, had so well defended Sens, where he still was, was placed under the orders of General Souham.

The journey from Arcis to Summepins was effected without difficulty. The French scarcely came in contact with some bands of Cossacks, that were hovering between the Aube and the Marne, and pillaging the country, desolated as it was. The corps of Oudinot, Macdonald, and Gérard, that had marched from Provins to Arcis, along the Aube, defended that river at the bridge of Arcis, and defiled unmolested in sight of the enemy.

Napoleon, on the night of the 21st, slept at Sommepins, with a part of the army; next day—the 22nd—he marched towards Vitry with a vanguard. Vitry had been put in a state of defence by the army of Silesia, and was then occupied by 5,000 or 6,000 Prussians and Russians protected by earthworks. Napoleon, not wishing to risk a terrible loss of life for a post that was of no great importance, sent to seek a ford between Vitry and Saint-Dizier. One was discovered at Frignicourt, where he crossed with his cavalry, and Ney's division of the Young Guard. He left a detachment to guard this ford, and passed the night at the Château du Plessis, near Orconte. He despatched the light infantry of General Piré to Saint Dizier, where they forced an entrance, and captured two Prussian battalions.

The next day—the 23rd—Napoleon thought it advisable to remain at Saint Dizier, and await there his remaining forces, for Oudinot, Macdonald, and Gérard were *en arriere*, and Marmont and Mortier had orders to join him by Châlons. It was also necessary to wait General Pacthod's division of the National Guards, that had behaved admirably with Oudinot and Macdonald, and had been left at Sezanne to escort a last convoy of troops and materials of war. Still, having some doubts as to the possibility of receiving this last transport, Napoleon ordered the War Minister to watch over its safety, and even bring it back to Paris, if he feared it might not reach Vitry through the opposing mass of enemies.

Without losing a moment, Napoleon directed his light cavalry on Bar-le-Duc, with directions to seize the bridge of Saint Mihiel, on the Meuse, and that of Pont-a-Mousson, on the Moselle; he sent fresh orders to all the garrisons to join him; he was preparing to spare them half the distance, by making one or two days' march to meet them—he would thus see his troops increase every hour. Independent of the Marshals Mortier and Marmont, independent of the Sézanne convoy, of which he had only received a part, and even deducting the losses at Arcis, and the troops left to guard the bridges of the Seine, he had about 55,000 men. He would have 70,000 when the two marshals joined, 80,000 when the Sézanne

depôt arrived, and his troops would gradually amount to 100,000 and more, if the different garrisons succeeded in joining him. Though he fully appreciated the difficulty of his position, he was still confident in the success of his tactics, and on the 23rd March, in a letter to the War Minister, which breathed an imperturbable coolness, he gave an account of his march, of his motives for not attacking Vitry, and his project of approaching Metz, to draw from that and other garrisons a considerable reinforcement: the certainty of alarming the enemy by cutting off their lines of communication; the dejection of the greater part of the Allies, who had never obtained any serious advantage over the French troops, and who had recently experienced enormous losses at Arcis-sur-Aube, and almost regretted having advanced so far; his consequent hope of shortly bringing about new and important events; the utility of watching over the Sézanne transport, and even increasing it, if circumstances permitted; the possibility of recurring to the conscription of 1815, for in Champagne and Lorraine the peasantry was rising *en masse*, and the urgency of making prompt use of this resource; the importance of inducing Marmont and Mortier, who had fallen back on Château-Thierry, to advance and join the main body of the army; and, lastly, his confidence, spite of all the difficulties of his position, of soon saving France and himself in this terrible crisis. Nobody would have suspected in reading this letter, the last addressed to the War Minister, that Napoleon was on the verge of an awful catastrophe.

At this very time, M. de Caulaincourt arrived at the Emperor's head-quarters; he had just quitted the congress at Châtillon. This devoted servant of his king and his country, had, as we have seen, presented a counter-project, in order to satisfy the reiterated demands of the allied plenipotentiaries, and had endeavoured to render the reading of the document supportable to his auditors, deviating, at the same time, as little as possible from Napoleon's instructions. The plenipotentiaries of the allied powers, after listening in glacial silence to the French counter-project, and after receiving orders from their sovereigns, had read on the 18th March, a formal note, in which they declared that France having again proposed all the conditions, already declared unacceptable by Europe, the conferences were finally broken off, and that war would be prosecuted *à outrance*, until France would admit, purely and simply, the preliminaries of the 17th February. To this declaration M. de Metternich added a private letter, for M. de Caulaincourt, in which he begged him once more to think seriously before quitting the place appointed for holding the Congress—"For," he said, "the France of Louis XIV., augmented by the conquests of Louis XV., was of some value, and ought not to be longer staked at the dangerous game of battles." However great might be the temptation of the French plenipotentiary to follow this advice, he dared not outstep his instructions to the degree that would have retained the members of the congress at Châtillon. He left the plenipoten-

tiaries the next day—the 19th—and on the 20th, the different legations set out for the head-quarters of the belligerent armies.

M. de Caulaincourt found some difficulty in rejoining Napoleon, whom he found at Saint-Dizier. The return of the French plenipotentiary produced a painful impression on the French soldiers, for it annihilated every hope founded on negotiations, and left them no prospect but war unto death with the Allies. If the battles of Montmirail, of Champaubert, and Montereau, had raised the hopes of the soldiers to a level with those of Napoleon, the battles of Craonne, of Laon, of Arcis-sur-Aube, had quickly brought them down from this elevation, and the daring system of tactics that the Emperor was now attempting at a distance from Paris, a system of tactics which few were capable of appreciating, astonished and troubled minds already deeply disturbed. The noble and stern countenance of M. de Caulaincourt, more sad than usual, was little calculated to smooth the thoughtful brows he met at head-quarters. Napoleon received his minister in a friendly manner, like a man who felt no ill humour, because he experienced no emotion. The return of his legate, however, produced a certain impression on his mind, but it was only transient, and he soon overcame it. He was at table, supping with Berthier, when M. de Caulaincourt arrived. "You do well to return," he said, "for I will not deny that, had you accepted the ultimatum of the Allies, I would have disowned you. Better for you and me to avoid such a rupture. At bottom these people are not sincere. Had you yielded, they would have soon asked more. They spread a report that their enmity is against me, and not against France. All lies! Their enmity is against me because they know I alone can save France (which was then true, for he who had brought her to the brink of ruin could alone save her); but at bottom, it is against France and her glory their enmity is directed. England covets Belgium for the house of Orange; Prussia covets the Meuse for herself; Austria wishes to deprive us of Alsace and Lorraine, to barter them with Bavaria and the German princes. They want to destroy us, or at least to diminish our power, so as to reduce us to nothing. Well, my dear Caulaincourt, it is better to die than be minced up in that way. I am too old a soldier to fear death. They shall not say, now, that it is to satisfy my own ambition I fight, for it would be easy for me to save the throne; but I do not wish for a throne, purchased by the humiliation of France. Look at these brave peasants, how they already rise and kill the Cossacks on every side! They give us an example. Let us follow it. Would you believe that these contemptible members of the Council of Regency were willing to accept the infamous treaty proposed to you? Ah, I have ordered them to be silent, and to be quiet. These poor peasants are far better than the Parisians. My dear Caulaincourt, you shall soon see glorious deeds. I am about to march to the fortresses, and within a few days collect thirty or forty thousand men. The enemy evidently pursues me. In

no other way can we explain the appearance of the masses of cavalry that hover round us. My sudden appearance on Schwarzenberg's rear has made him fall back; and when he learns that I threaten his line of communication, he will not dare to advance on Paris. I shall soon have one hundred thousand men under my command; I shall pounce upon the nearest enemy, no matter whether Blucher or Schwarzenberg; I shall crush him, and the Burgundian peasantry will do the rest. The coalition, my dear Caulaincourt, is as near destruction as I am; and if I conquer, we shall tear these abominable treaties. If I miscalculate, then we shall die. We shall only do what our old companions in arms are doing every day, but we shall die after having saved our honour."

M. de Caulaincourt, who was as capable as anybody of comprehending this heroic language, remembered too many deliberate faults, too many ill-timed refusals, that honour had not counselled; his manner expressed discontent and cool disapprobation. Berthier, in whose presence this discourse occurred, was astounded. He, like Napoleon, was impressed by the encompassing presence of the enemy, and, like the Emperor, doubted that these troops could be merely a detachment; but, on the other hand, he asked himself how 200,000 allied troops, in whose favour victory had almost declared, could turn away from Paris, that great prey, that was almost within their grasp, to pursue a handful of men that had ventured to appear in their rear. He doubted, and under the circumstances doubt was agony; for, if the enemy were not in pursuit, they might within a few days reach Paris. This was the prevailing opinion. Restrained in presence of Napoleon, these opinions found vent elsewhere in unmeasured language. As to Napoleon himself, though his doubts were not allayed, he still repeated to M. de Caulaincourt, "You did well to return; I would have disowned you. You are come in time to witness great things."

All this energy, admirable, considered as a gift of God, but deplorable when we reflect that, ill-employed, it had conducted us to the brink of an abyss, this energy was not infectious, and the entire army expected every moment a terrible *denoument*. This *denoument* was indeed approaching; the fatal hour had at length arrived. Napoleon's military combinations were certainly profound; but if the efforts of genius could readjust his military affairs, no power of genius could retrieve his political position. Paris, filled with terror and disgusted with his *régime*, a *régime* glorious but sanguinary, methodical but despotic; Paris, at the first appearance of enemies who declared themselves liberators, might be lost to Napoleon, and become the theatre of a revolution! Should the Allies only suspect this sad truth, it would suffice to make them neglect all prudential considerations, and think of making this the scene, not of a military, but a political operation; and then Napoleon's plans would be frustrated, and his throne, which his powerful hand had two or three times within the last month sustained under terrible shocks, would

crumble into dust. We shall now see how near the Allies were to guess the terrible truth, that constituted all our weakness with regard to our invaders.

Prince Schwarzenberg had not very clearly understood the movement of the French army on Arcis; and it must be confessed that, to any one not in the secret, it would have presented some difficulty. His first and most natural supposition was, that Napoleon was going to give him battle, and the Austrian General determined to accept it at Arcis-sur-Aube, as Blucher had at Craonne and Laon. Expecting a sanguinary struggle of some days continuance, he was far from thinking it finished on the evening of the 21st. Seeing Napoleon withdraw on the 22nd, he endeavoured to guess what could be his design, crossed the Aube in his rear, and took up a position between Ramerupt and Dampierre, behind a wide brook called le Puits; his left was the Aube, his front covered by le Puits, his right in the direction of Vitry. In this position he awaited fresh attacks on the part of his adversary, whom he feared was contemplating some extraordinary movement.

But Napoleon, as we have just seen, had no idea of attacking his foe, and was indeed meditating an extraordinary movement in advancing from the Aube to the Marne, in the direction of Metz. The next day,—the 23rd—whilst Napoleon awaited at Saint-Dizier, the rear of his army that were to join him by the Frignicourt ford, Prince Schwarzenberg's light cavalry, who followed on his track, perceived the movement of the French army, and saw clearly that they were taking the direction of Vitry. Of Napoleon's intentions there could now be no doubt, for it was evident he purposed to cut off the Allies' lines of communication. What was to be done in this state of things? Would it be better to pursue Napoleon in the direction of Lorraine; or, join Blucher, who could not be very distant, and, with their combined troops, march on Paris, at the head of 200,000 men! The question was important, one of the most important that the heads of empires and commanders of armies were ever called on to resolve.

According to the strict rule of military tactics, the lines of communication ought not to be abandoned; on the contrary, they ought to be guarded with a care proportionate to the daring and formidable character of the enemy. The lines of communication being threatened by Napoleon, Schwarzenberg ought to pursue him, conjointly with Blucher, and determine the military question before advancing to Paris to receive the prize of victory. There were, undoubtedly, some advantages to be gained by marching directly on Paris, especially that of abridging the struggle; still, should the allies be arrested before the gates of the capital, by a resistance, not alone military, but popular, and should the Allies be detained some days outside Paris, fighting at the outskirts of the barricaded suburbs, they might be attacked in the rear by Napoleon, returning with an army of 100,000 men, and find themselves in a most perilous position.

These reasons were of great weight, and would have been decisive, had the situation been an ordinary one, and had the Allies been likely to encounter before the walls of Paris, a resistance, such as the importance of the place, and the patriotism and courage of the inhabitants might lead them to fear. But though they had received only one communication from Paris, that of which M. de Vitrolles was bearer, and though hitherto no manifestation had corroborated the truth of this communication, but that, on the contrary, the peasants were arming in the invaded provinces, they had discovered, by more than one symptom, that if M. de Vitrolles exaggerated in describing France as longing ardently for the Bourbons, he was perfectly right when he maintained that she was tired of war, of conscription, of imperial prefects, and that as soon as an opportunity of declaring her real sentiments offered, she would raise her voice against a government that, after having carried war to the very walls of the Kremlin, had now rolled back the destructive tide to the gates of Paris. There was a personage whose opinions commanded much more attention than those of M. de Vitrolles; this was Count Pozzo di Borgo, who had returned from London, and had acquired amongst the Allies an influence proportionate to his talents, and who never wearied of repeating to them that they ought to march on Paris. "The great object of the war," he said, "is the possession of Paris. As long as you think of fighting battles you run the chance of being beaten, because Napoleon will always fight better than you, and his army, even though discontented, but sustained by a sentiment of honour, will fight beside him to the last man. All-ruined as is his military power, it is still great, very great, and, aided by his genius, greater than yours. But his political power is at an end. The times have changed. A military despotism, hailed as a blessing, at the close of the Revolution, has been tested by its results, and is now universally condemned. If you give scope for a manifestation it will be prompt, general, irresistible, and Napoleon being at a distance, the Bourbons, whom France has forgotten, and in whose talents she has no confidence, will become suddenly popular, and from popular, necessary. It is by a political, not a military movement, that you ought to try and finish the war, and to achieve that as soon as an opening of any kind occurs between the belligerent armies, through which you can pass, hasten to take advantage of it; if you can lay a finger on Paris, even a single finger, the colossus is overthrown. You will have broken the sword you cannot wrest from him."

Such was the substance of the speeches unceasingly addressed by Count Pozzo to the Emperor Alexander, and he certainly had to do with a very impressionable person. Besides the very remarkable intelligence of Alexander, Count Pozzo had enlisted in his favour all the passions of this prince. To be revenged, not for the burning of Moscow, of which he had ceased to think, but for the personal humiliations that Napoleon had inflicted on him; to enter Paris, enter the capital of the civilized world, and there dethrone a despot and stretch forth a succouring hand to the French people; to re-

ceive for these deeds, universal applause; this was the intoxicating dream in which he indulged. This dream so occupied his mind, that to realise it he was capable of acts of daring, alike foreign to his head and heart.

As to the rest, Count Pozzo di Borgo's opinions had gradually taken possession of the public mind. Owing their origin to the Prussians, amongst whom they had been engendered by hate, they afterwards found acceptance amongst the Russians, and finally amongst the Austrians. The latter very clearly understood that to strike Napoleon politically, was the surest and promptest manner of destroying him. The Emperor Francis and M. de Metternich, though regretting in him, not a son-in-law, but a ruler more capable than any other of governing France, had felt, since the dissolution of the congress at Châtillon, that Austria should take a decisive part against Napoleon personally. They had long shrunk from the necessity of pushing things to an extremity, but having crossed the Rhine, and admitted the principle of the limits of 1790, which rendered the ancient Low-Countries monarchless, and for which Austria was to have Italy in exchange; knowing Napoleon too well to believe that he would ever submit to such a reduction of his territories, they had, through ambition, reached the same conclusion, to which the Prussians had been led by hatred and the Russians by vanity. To seek at Paris, the political solution of the question, which involved at the same time the military solution, seemed to them now a necessity. Prince Schwarzenberg, timid but steady, had adopted the same opinions as M. de Metternich and the Emperor Francis, for, at this moment, Austria presented the extraordinary phenomenon of an Emperor, a Prime Minister, and a Generalissimo, identical in their sentiments, constituting, as it were, but one man, insensible alike to love and hate, and influenced solely by deep-laid calculations. Under these circumstances, Prince Schwarzenberg, seeing the road to Paris open, was inclined, for the first time, to advance, so that the resolution of marching on the capital was almost unanimously adopted, though several experienced officers opposed this rash proceeding, as contrary to the rules of war, which teach that the lines of communication should never be abandoned, nor victory risked by a too great eagerness to attain it. An event calculated to strengthen the opinion of the more daring, occurred during the day. Wintzingerode's cavalry, forming Blucher's vanguard, had fallen in near the Marne, with the cavalry of Count Pahlen, belonging to Prince Schwarzenberg. There were mutual congratulations and rejoicings at this junction, which, to say the truth, ought to have taken place sooner, for the battle of Laon, having been fought on the 9th and 10th March, it was strange that Blucher had not pursued Napoleon or the Marshals who had replaced him on the Aisne, and that on the 23rd, he was still groping between the Aisne and the Marne. But Blucher had acted like generals who possess more obstinacy of temper than firmness of mind. He had first tried to take Reims, then Soissons—had long

waited the arrival of some thousands of Bulow's corps, that had remained *en arriere*, and had finally decided to drive the Marshals, Mortier and Marmont, before him, and had reached the Marne by Châlons. However this may be, he brought with him one hundred thousand men, and the Allies had now two hundred thousand ready to march on Paris. The presence of such a force easily removed objections, founded on the rules of war, however skilfully propounded.

Whilst things were in this state, Prince Schwarzenberg was passing the night with the Emperor Alexander at the Château de Dampierre, when suddenly despatches were brought, that had been taken from a Paris courier, arrested by the allied light infantry. Prince Wolkonski, the head of Alexander's staff, was at the château, as well as Count Nesselrode, the head of his *chancellerie*. The latter was called, who having long resided at Paris, might be better able to seize the meaning of the intercepted despatches, which were submitted to his perusal. These were extremely important. They consisted of letters from the Empress and the Duke de Rovigo to the Emperor. Both expressed intense alarm about the internal state of Paris. Those of the Empress, breathing a sort of terror, were not, of course, of great significance, for they might be only an expression of feminine weakness. But the letters of the Duke de Rovigo would be estimated differently; for, minister of police and a soldier, long accustomed to difficulties, he could not be suspected of timidity; and he declared that Paris contained within its walls influential accomplices of the foreigners, and that at the appearance of an allied army, it was probable they would follow the example of the Bordelais. This revelation was, at such a moment, of immense importance; it threw new light on the political position of affairs, and put an end to any remaining doubts as to the course to be pursued. After this involuntary avowal on the part of the Emperor's government, of his wife, and his minister of police, there could no longer be a doubt that the imperial throne was tottering to its fall, and that to march on Paris was the most certain means of hastening its destruction. The Emperor Alexander and Prince Schwarzenberg were hastily awoke, and the intercepted despatches laid before them; these papers carried instant conviction to the minds of both. To march directly on Paris seemed the most suitable determination, one that ought to be put into execution at day-break. The three sovereigns were not on the spot. Alexander, the most active of the three, wishing to be everywhere, and particularly with the generals, was, at the actual time, with Prince Schwarzenberg. The most modest, the wisest, he who made least commotion, and who, not being a soldier, did not wish to embarrass the military chiefs by his presence, the Emperor Francis, had taken up his abode at Bar-sur-Aube, a considerable distance from head-quarters. The King of Prussia, who was a kind of medium between the two emperors, being more reserved than the one, more active than the other, was staying in the neighbourhood. It was agreed that he should be immediately sought,

and that in the morning the army should march towards the Marne, where Blucher was; that all the allied forces being combined, a consultation should be held, whose result the presence of the Prussians rendered certain; and that the army should take the route to Paris. Prince Schwarzenberg undertook to acquaint his master with the plan that had been adopted; and to beg of him, by letter, not to think of joining the invading army, lest he might, in the intercrossings of the belligerent armies, fall into the hands of his son-in-law, which would be a serious complication in the actual state of things. There was a line of communication through Burgundy that might be called Austrian, as reinforcements had been sent to Count de Bubna from Troyes to Dijon. Prince Schwarzenberg advised the Emperor Francis and M. de Metternich to go to Dijon; for, independent of the inconvenience of being made prisoner, it would not be suitable that the Emperor Francis should be present at the dethronement of his son-in-law, and especially of his daughter. These arrangements being made, they left Dampierre for Sommepins on the morning of the 24th.

The journey was not long, the distance being scarcely three leagues. The Emperor Alexander, Prince Schwarzenberg, Wolkonski, the head of the staff, and Count Nesselrode, left the château of Dampierre together, and met at Sommepins the King of Prussia, Blucher, and his staff. It is asserted that the fatal resolution that was to lead the armies of Europe within the walls of Paris, was taken on a little mound in the neighbourhood of Sommepins, and that there the consultation was held, whose result was already certain, since to all the sentiments that had obtained in the château of Dampierre, the Prussian passions were now added. The council was almost unanimous. Replies swarmed in answer to the objections founded on military principles, which were the offspring of a servile subservience to the rules of war. Napoleon was about to cut off the Allies' lines of communication; but they were also about to cut off his. The mischief he would do in seizing their magazines, their hospitals, their rear-guards, their convoys of *matériel*, would be doubly, trebly repaid by capturing what they should find on the Nancy route, between Paris and the French army. He would take much; they would take more. And afterwards, whither would both parties go? Napoleon would go to Metz and Strasbourg, where his presence would decide nothing; the Allies would go to Paris, where they were certain of effecting a revolution, and snatching from Napoleon the power that rendered him so formidable. To pursue him would be to carry out his own views—for that was evidently what he desired, in executing this extraordinary and unexpected movement towards Lorraine. But it would be turning from the main object, and exposing themselves to a series of military chances; for Napoleon would be reinforced by the junction of his garrisons, and the Allies would recommence with exhausted armies against recently-recruited forces, the formidable game of battles at which, undoubtedly, Napoleon was the

stronger; the war would be lengthened out, interminable complications would arise, and very probably, the Allies would end by falling into some snare that Napoleon would have the art to spread, and which they would not have the skill to avoid, and in which they would be finally ruined. To go to Paris and strike Napoleon a vital blow, was the shortest and surest way, though it appeared the most dangerous; and, in any case, supposing they could not enter the capital of France, there was a line of retreat secured—that from Paris to Lille, the Belgic route—where the Allies would meet Bernadotte with 100,000 Dutch, English, Hanoverians, and Swedes.

There was no weighty argument to oppose to this mode of reasoning. Everybody yielded, and this frustrated Napoleon's calculations, by regarding only political considerations, whilst he, despising politics, to whose suggestions he seldom lent an ear, founded all his proceedings on military considerations. As usual, having reasoned on military premises, he was politically wrong, and thus continually deceiving himself, his destruction became inevitable.

It was immediately resolved that all the Allied *corps d'armée* should pause on the spot where they were, and, on the following morning, march for Paris. But some troops should be left in Napoleon's rear, either to harass or watch him, and obtain intelligence of his movements, in case, that changing his resolve, he should return on Paris. General Wintzingerode was ordered to keep close in his rear, with ten thousand horse, some thousand light infantry, and a large number of artillery. These troops would be sufficient to cause him, now and then, some annoyance, but would be especially useful in gaining intelligence of his resolves as soon as they were formed. The Allies, in advancing on Paris, were desirous of having an emissary who would precede them, and enter into relations with MM. de Talleyrand and de Dalberg, whom they regarded as the principal instruments of the revolution they contemplated. There was an emissary ready to their wishes—M. de Vitrolles—sent by the malcontent chiefs, and sending him back would only be replying to the overture they had made. But M. de Vitrolles was no longer to be had. Faithful, it must be confessed, to the promises made at Châtillon, the allied sovereigns had not wished to give M. de Vitrolles a hearing before the dissolution of the congress. Considering themselves free after that event, they had consented to receive and hear him, and expressed a wish to send him to Paris. But he, anxious to see the Bourbons, whom he loved, and who were about to become masters of France, preferred going to Lorraine, where, it was believed, the Count d'Artois had already arrived, than to return to Paris and run the risk of falling into the hands of the Duke de Rovigo. He persevered in requesting permission to seek the Count d'Artois. There were, certainly, many important arrangements to be made with this Prince, for it was imperative that the very day on which the Allies entered this formidable Paris—formidable whether they appeared as conquerors or as liberators—it was imperative, we say, that a Government

should be ready organized, under whose rule the French might immediately place themselves, and though the Allies felt no decided preference for the Bourbons, yet the return of these princes resulted so spontaneously from the nature of things, that it would be necessary to act in concert with them. The allied sovereigns therefore consented to the departure of M. de Vitrolles for Lorraine, and it was arranged that after having seen the Count d'Artois, he should return to head-quarters, outside the walls of Paris. He was commissioned to tell the Count d'Artois that in returning to France, he should lay aside many prejudices, forget many persons and circumstances, and be directed by the advice of MM. de Dalberg, de Talleyrand, and such persons.

M. de Vitrolles, having left before the events at Arcis-sur-Aube occurred, the Allies, on marching on Paris, had no means prepared of communicating with those inside the walls, but the gates of this capital, once opened by the instrumentality of cannon, it was presumed that political relations might be easily established. The next day, the 25th March, a day of mournful memory, the allied forces, henceforth combined, set out, Blucher's army on the right, Schwarzenberg's on the left, both advancing on Fère-Champenoise, the Paris route between the Marne and the Seine.

Advancing in this direction, the Allies could not fail to meet several corps, unfortunately scattered, who, in obedience to orders and their own inclinations, were *en route* to join Napoleon. Amongst these corps, the principal were those of Mortier and Marmont, that had been left as an army of observation in advance of Blucher, and the great convoy of reinforcement and *matériel* sent to Sézanne, to be put under general Pacthod's escort. We shall now relate what had befallen each up to the 25th March.

Napolcon, in quitting Reims, had left Mortier there to support Marmont, who was defending the bridge of the Aisne at Berry-au-Bac, whilst General Charpentier, with some *débris*, defended at Soissons, the second bridge of the Aisne. When Blucher, having lost six or seven days in vain deliberations at Laon, determined to march to the Aisne, he found the bridge of Berry-au-Bac too well guarded to be carried by a direct attack. He sent a strong detachment, some leagues higher up, to Neuchâtel, where the passage was easy, whilst he made a feint of passing lower down, at Pontavert. As soon as the detachment that had crossed the Aisne at Neuchâtel reached the high grounds at Berry-au-Bac, Blucher advanced on the 18th to attack the bridge. But Marshal Marmont had mined it, and it was blown up with a terrible explosion before the eyes of the Prussians. Marmont then retired through Roucy on Fismes. This was an error and the source of great misfortunes.

The most natural movement for Marshal Marmont would have been to fall back on his reserve, that is to say, on Marshal Mortier, who was at Reims. It is true that Napoleon had given instructions both to cover Paris and to keep up a communication with him. But if Fismes was on the route to Paris, so was Reims, and by

repairing there, Marmont had the advantage of concentrating his forces and coming in direct communication with Napoleon. It would therefore have been better to go to Reims than to Fismes, for in marching towards Fismes there was an almost evident risk of being cut off from Napoleon, which was contrary to half his orders, and might induce, as we shall see, fatal consequences.

Marshal Marmont, probably influenced by the sight of the enemy's corps that had passed the Aisne at Neuchâtel, and who were advancing against his right, instinctively drew off to the left, and it was in consequence of this merely mechanical movement that he fell back on Fismes. Having arrived at this place, he felt himself isolated, and summoned Marshal Mortier to his aid. The latter, modest and wholly free from jealousy, knowing that Marmont had more talent than himself, and forgetting that he had not as much good sense, thought it his duty to defer to his colleague's opinion, and left Reims on the 19th; he joined Marmont at Fismes, which proves that the two marshals might in the first instance have repaired to Reims, without being on that account cut off from the Paris route. Their combined forces amounted to about fifteen thousand men.

They remained in position, on a hillock called Saint Martin, until the evening of the next day, the 20th; this proves that the enemy was not very troublesome, and it also proves how easy it would have been, during these first days, to manœuvre as they pleased between Paris and Napoleon. On the evening of the 20th, despatches arrived from Napoleon, written at Plancy, at the moment when he was leaving for Arcis. These despatches condemned the movement on Fismes, as separating the marshals from him, and ordered them to rejoin him by the route supposed to be the shortest and safest. To return to Reims was no longer possible, for the enemy had taken advantage of our retreat to occupy the place. From Fismes to Epernay, which would have been the most direct route to join Napoleon, there were no roads practicable for artillery. It would therefore have been necessary to come down to Château-Thierry, and cross the Marne there, then reascend between the Marne and the Seine, by the Montmirail route, thus losing two days, and exposing themselves to vexatious encounters. As there was no choice, the marshals set out on the evening of the 20th, and arrived on the 21st at Château-Thierry; they recrossed the Marne there, and the next day, the 22nd, advanced on Champaubert by two different routes, in order not to embarrass each other by following the same road. They arrived at their destination in the evening. On the 23rd, they went to Bergères, whence they began to get a glimpse of the enemy, and were obliged to proceed very cautiously. They learned that Napoleon had had a bloody affair at Arcis, that he had recrossed the Aube, and returned to the Marne in the neighbourhood of Vitry. To proceed in this direction, and endeavour to reach the Emperor, was the duty of the marshals, however great the risk. They consequently resolved to advance as far as Soudé-Sainte-Croix, half a day's march from Vitry; if they found an opening through

the columns of the allied army, they intended to dash through blindly, in order to join Napoleon. If they did not succeed, and if the adverse army remained interposed in a compact mass between them and Napoleon, their intention was to follow their movements cautiously, and fall back and cover Paris, should the Allies advance on the capital. In fact, this was the only plan of conduct left them to follow, after committing the error of retiring to Fismes instead of Reims.

The next day, the 24th March, the two marshals repaired to Soudé-Sainte-Croix, but Marshal Mortier, wishing to know what was going on at Châlons, conceived the idea of crossing by Vatry, which would necessarily prolong his route. Marmont arrived in the evening at Soudé-Sainte-Croix, and finding that he alone had kept the appointment, felt very uneasy. A vast line of fires gradually sprang up before him, until the horizon glowed in the reflected blaze. Marmont selected three of his officers, who spoke German and Polish, and sent them to reconnoitre; one of these, a Pole, a brave and intelligent man, penetrated into the enemy's bivouacs, and learned all he wished to know; he soon returned to make his report to Marshal Marmont. According to this report, all the allied armies lay before them, amounting to nearly 200,000 men, and they were separated by this enormous mass from Napoleon, who had set out for Saint Dizier. It would be scarcely possible to reach the imperial army, opposed by such obstacles. Marmont sent an officer to Mortier, begging him to come up as quickly as possible, and recommending him to take a position in the rear, as a protection against the dangerous neighbours whose vicinity they had just discovered.

The following day, the 25th March, Mortier had an interview with Marmont. He had lost time in crossing by Vatry, and had received on the way the same intelligence that his colleague had learned. In consequence of this information, both thought it advisable to fall back on Fère-Champenoise; besides, the enemy's columns advancing towards them, rendered this movement unavoidable. Marmont prepared to retire to Sommesous, earnestly entreating his colleague to take the same direction.

Such had been the operations of the Marshals Marmont and Mortier, up to the morning of the 25th March, the very hour that the allied armies commenced their march on Paris. Two other corps, those of General Pacthod and General Compans, soon after found themselves in a position similar to that of the two marshals. General Pacthod had been left at Sézanne, with his division of the National Guards, to escort the reinforcements destined for the army. He had been successively joined by different battalions, some of the Line, others of the Young Guard, who had come from Paris under General Compans, and an immense quantity of artillery, the whole amounting to about 10,000 men. Napoleon had reckoned on these reinforcements, and had several times recommended them to the especial care of the War Minister; the minister bestowed little attention on them, and these battalions wandered about at random,

awaiting instructions that never arrived. General Pacthod having learned by different *reconnaisances* that he was near Marmont and Mortier, wrote to the latter, who did not know what advice to give, and Pacthod, receiving no answer, advanced from Sézanne to Fère-Champenoise, in the direction from the Aube to the Marne, by which movement he would cross the route of the two marshals, and could easily join them. On the very morning of the 25th, he crossed their line of march, and found himself near a place called Villeseneux. General Compans followed General Pacthod at a great distance.

This was the position of the different French corps, when on the morning of the 25th, the allied army, abandoning to Wintzingerode the pursuit of Napoleon, took the road to Paris. Blucher advanced to the right, protected by the Marne, Schwarzenberg to the left, protected by the Aube. Nearly 20,000 horse preceded the two columns. The infantry followed within half-an hour's march.

When Marshal Marmont saw the storm advancing in his direction, he immediately comprehended that the enemy had abandoned Napoleon, and were marching on Paris; he retraced his steps towards Sommesous, along the Fère-Champenoise route. The Marshal —an excellent tactician—retreated in good order, sheltering his cavalry, that was not very numerous, behind his infantry squares. He paused at every tenable position, covering the advancing enemy with grape, and then resumed his march, still protecting his artillery and cavalry, with his squares, whose solidity was not shaken for a moment.

At Sommesous a new vexation awaited him. Mortier, though hurrying, had not yet reached the rendezvous, and Marmont was obliged to wait his arrival, rather than run the risk of a separation. The combined forces of the two marshals would amount, at the utmost, to 15,000 men. What would become of them, if separated?

Marmont therefore waited resolutely the arrival of his colleague, but meanwhile he was exposed to many cavalry charges, and what was more vexatious, he was forced to lose most precious time, during which the enemy's columns had leisure to advance, and became more threatening. At length Mortier arrived, and the two marshals set out for Fère-Champenoise.

They had scarcely traversed some thousand metres when they were attacked by a terrific mass of cavalry, supported by infantry. The two marshals sheltered themselves in a position that permitted them to resist some time. Two ravines, not very distant from each other, and running parallel, the one towards Vassimont, the other towards Connantray, left between them an open space of small extent, and easily defended. The marshals took up a position between the two ravines, fortifying the space that separated them; their left supported by the ravine of Vassimont, their right by that of Connantray; they thus covered the Fère-Champenoise route. They held their position as well as they could, confronted by the enemy's cavalry and artillery. The French cavalry, posted in

the plain, defended themselves valiantly, but were at last driven back by Pahlen's horse, and obliged to take shelter behind our infantry.

During the proceedings the weather, which had been bad, became worse, and violent hail, beaten into the eyes of our artillerymen, obscured their vision; and now, the Russian horse, dashing on the Bordessoulle cuirassiers, who were on our left, a little in advance of Mortier, drove them back on our infantry. The Young Guard had hastily formed in squares, but their ammunition being rendered useless by the rain, they could not offer an effectual opposition to the enemy, and two of the squares of the Jamin brigade were broken. At the same moment an alarming spectacle presented itself to the eyes of our troops, who, spite of their youth, had hitherto unflinchingly maintained their ground. It was not that they were called on to dispute, during an hour or two, the space lying between the ravines of Vassimont and Connantry, they should afterwards fall back and defile through the village of Connantry that supported our right, and through which the Fère-Champenoise high road passed. Whilst the main body of the enemy's cavalry charged us in front, a portion of their cavalry having crossed the Connantry ravine on our right, came galloping on our rear in the direction of Fere-Champenoise. Threatened in the rear, and exposed in front to reiterated attacks, our soldiers wheeled round a little too quickly, and retired on Fère-Champenoise in considerable confusion. Marmont's corps crossed Connantry with no greater loss than a few pieces of cannon, but Mortier had some difficulty in extricating himself, and would have been overwhelmed had he not suddenly received unexpected aid.

Amongst the troops of the Generals Pacthod and Compans there were some cavalry regiments, hastily organized in the Versailles depôt. One of these regiments having followed in General Pacthod's track, suddenly appeared between Vassimont and Connantry, charged the enemy's cavalry, disembarrassed our infantry, and saved Marshal Mortier's corps. The latter escaped like Marmont, by the sacrifice of part of his artillery, that could not cross the Connantry ravine to reach Fère-Champenoise.

This skirmish, in which the bad weather, aiding an enemy ten times more numerous than we, had paralysed the resistance of our soldiers, cost us about three thousand men, and a considerable quantity of artillery. This was a severe loss, whether considered in itself, or relatively to the numerical weakness of the two marshals, and it was not the last they were destined to experience.

It was impossible to take up an abode at Fère-Champenoise; the marshals could only pass the night there. They were obliged to march towards Sézanne. But they were not sure of reaching the place, harassed as they were by hordes of enemies. Happily, in order to reach Sézanne, they skirted the heights over which passes the main road from Châlons to Montmirail, and where, a month before, the French troops had fought so gloriously. On the right was

one of the little hillocks belonging to this range; it jutted into the plain, forming a kind of promontory. On this spot the marshals were preparing to take up a position for the night, and shelter themselves from the incessant attacks of the enemy's cavalry. But as they were marching to their destination, a terrible cannonade was heard on their right and in their rear. The marshals became thoughtful, and Mortier remembered the brave and unfortunate Pacthod, who had asked him for advice that he was not able to give.

General Pacthod, in fact, endeavouring to join the marshals, had gone beyond Fère-Champenoise, and to overtake them, had advanced as far as Villeseneux. Having there learned their retrograde movement, he retraced his steps, pursued by Wassiltsikoff's cavalry, and directed his march towards Fère-Champenoise, at the very moment Mortier left. General Pacthod abandoned the hope of reaching the place, and resolved to fall back towards Pierre-Morains and Bannes, expecting to find shelter near the Saint-Gond marshes. He marched with three thousand National Guards, formed into five squares, and was forced to take refuge in a valley, surrounded on every side by the enemy's troops. These troops did not at first recognise each other, for some belonged to Blucher, others to Schwarzenberg, and they fired at each other. They soon perceived their error, and concentrated their fire on General Pacthod's unfortunate squares. The two last of these squares, that formed the rear-guard from Villeseneux, had made a heroic resistance, though composed of National Guards the greater part of whom had never seen service. Surrounded on every side, exposed to showers of grape, they held their ground, until beaten down by the artillery and their lines broken by the cavalry, they were cut down to the last man. The three remaining squares, driven towards the marsh of Saint-Gond, were at last forced into a single mass, and though still exposed to a heavy fire of grape, they refused to lay down their arms. Every fresh discharge of artillery produced frightful ravages amongst them.

The Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia, who had hastened to the spot, were touched by such heroism. Alexander sent one of his officers to summon them to surrender in his name; and those that remained surrendered to him. This prince could not help feeling some disquietude, in seeing the simple National Guards defend themselves with such energy; and he testified his astonishment and admiration of their conduct some days after. Noble and saddening episode of these wars, alike unwise and sanguinary!

This disastrous day of Fère-Champenois, which the Allies have decorated with the name of battle, and which was only the fortuitous encounter of 200,000 men with some straggling corps that fought in the proportion of one against ten, cost us about 6,000 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners, without reckoning a great quantity of artillery. General Compans' corps, that had early taken the resolution of falling back, had marched on Coulommiers, and in perfect safety outstripped the enemy on the Meaux route.

The next day, the 26th March, the two marshals, whose united

forces amounted to nearly 12,000 men, advanced on Ferté-Gaucher, in order to place themselves on the Marne between Lagny and Meaux, and defend Paris; for the Marne, falling into the Seine at Charenton—that is to say, above Paris, protects the capital against an enemy coming from the north-east. They traversed Sézanne at an early hour, meeting only some Cossacks, whom they dispersed, and continued their way through Mœurs and Esternay. Marshal Marmont formed the head, Marshal Mortier the rear of the column.

In the afternoon, the advanced posts of our cavalry gave notice of the presence of the enemy at Ferté-Gaucher, which caused extreme surprise and a species of terror. General Compans having passed in this direction a few hours previously, and the enemy that pursued us being in the rear, it was difficult to understand how an adverse force should appear in front. Still the thing was very simple, though it did not appear so. Blucher, in advancing on Chalons to join the army of Bohemia, had left Bulow before Soissons, and sent Kleist and d'York in pursuit of the two marshals. Kleist and d'York followed them to Château-Thierry, and from Château-Thierry had thrown themselves directly on Ferté-Gaucher, to cut them off from Paris.

Mortier and Marmont held a consultation on the spot, and it was agreed that the former should force a passage at Ferté-Gaucher, whilst the latter should hold the enraged pursuing enemy in check, by defending Moutils *à outrance*. The Christiani division of the Old Guard vigorously attacked Ferté-Gaucher, but could not dislodge the enemy, who were strongly posted on the banks of the Grand-Morin. Marshal Marmont, on his side, defended himself valiantly in the defile of Moutils. The two marshals passed the day in this manner, their hearts oppressed with care, and not knowing how they should issue from this cut-throat trap, for they had the allied troops both in front and rear. Towards night, however, they conceived the design of turning to the left, and trying to reach Provins through Courtacon. The plan was executed successfully. Profiting of the darkness, they marched through the open country on the left, and reached Provins, after frightful sufferings, but without experiencing any greater loss than that of some wagons. Happily, the men and cannon were saved, and with the loss of a few carriages, the marshals extricated themselves from this fearful difficulty. But the line of march was now changed, and there remained no other way of reaching Paris, than by following the road along the right bank of the Seine, from Melun to Charenton. The enemy were now at liberty to advance to the Marne, and cross it where they would, having no other obstacle to fear than General Compans' feeble division that had retired to Meaux. It was therefore incumbent on the Marshals to hasten, that they might arrive in time before the walls of Paris and join General Compans, should he be so fortunate as to escape; in short, they wished to unite with the remaining patriotic citizens, and defend with them the capital of our country, against Europe, that was thirsting for vengeance.

The marshals, fully comprehending there was no other line of conduct left them to follow, allowed their troops some rest, of which they stood much in need, for they had been marching three days and nights; they set out on the evening of the 27th, for Paris, Marshal Marmont taking the Melun route, and Mortier that of Mormant, that they might not embarrass each other in pursuing the same road.

The next day—the 28th—they were equally far advanced on their respective routes; the one slept at Melun, the other at Mormant. On the 29th, they combined their forces and crossed the Marne, at the point where it falls into the Seine, that is to say, at the bridge of Charenton. The two marshals went to receive the orders of Joseph and the Regent for the defence of the capital.

General Compans, on his side, was joined *en route* by the retreating troops of General Vincent, that had occupied Château-Thierry, and those of General Charpentier, that had occupied Soissons, and who were falling back before the allied masses; with these he halted at Meaux, destroyed the bridges, sunk the fragments in the waves, and fell back, through Clay and Bondy, on Paris. The two armies of Bohemia and Silesia, having arrived at the Marne, it was necessary to make arrangements for appearing before Paris. This great capital, renowned through the entire world, is situate below the confluence of the Marne with the Seine, and it is the largest and most populous part of Paris that lies exposed to an enemy coming from the north-east. In the times of which we speak, this quarter had no other protection than the heights of Romainville, of Saint-Chaumont, and of Montmartre. The Allies would be obliged to cross the Marne *en masse* to force our last defences and avenge twenty years humiliation. They crossed the river above and below Meaux, and distributed their forces in the following manner in advancing on Paris:—

In the first place, the corps of Sacken and de Wrède were posted at Meaux, to cover the Allies' rear against a sudden attack, and this precaution was very natural, for they had left Napoleon at Saint Dizier. Blucher, with the corps of Kleist and d'York combined into one, with Woronzoff's corps (formerly Wintzingerode's), with Langeron's, the four comprising 90,000 men, was to move to the right, and take the Soissons route, in order to advance through Bourget on Saint Denis and Montmartre. Bulow's corps had orders to seize Soissons. Prince Schwarzenberg, with Rajeffsky's corps (formerly Wittgenstein's) and the reserves, amounting in all to about 50,000 men was to come by Meaux, Clay, and Bondy, on Pantin, la Villette, and the heights of Romainville. The Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, with his own corps and that of Giulay, amounting to about 30,000 men, was to come through Chelles, Nogent-sur-Marne, and Vincennes, on Montreuil and Charonne. The three columns had orders to appear before the walls of Paris, on the evening of the 29th, that they might be ready to commence an attack on the 30th. The allied armies were actually *en marche* to arrive on an

appointed day before the walls of that great capital, the object of their long cherished hatred and ambition.

It is unnecessary to say, for we can all divine, what were the feelings of the Parisians. It was now beyond all doubt that the allied armies had resolved to march on Paris. Napoleon, whether through necessity, or as the result of a plan of operations that his people did not understand, was at this moment at a distance from his capital, and totally unable to protect it. With the exception of some men, blinded by party feeling, the mass of the inhabitants was overwhelmed with grief, and would have hailed a deliverer, no matter whom. The desire to be delivered from Napoleon's government was as nothing compared to the fear of an assault, and the horrors that might ensue. The National Guards, drawn exclusively from the middle classes, and reduced to 12,000 men, had not 3,000 muskets; some were armed with pikes, which rendered them ridiculous. The people, though disliking the conscription, and the *droits réunis*, shuddered at the appearance of foreigners, and would have willingly taken arms, if the Government had any to give, and would place so much confidence in the citizens.

The populace wandered about idle, restless, discontented, in the faubourgs and on the boulevards. At the barriers crowds of peasants were seen driving their cattle before them, and bringing on carts whatever they could save of their humble furniture. The Government had not thought of exempting these poor people from the entrance duty, and some of them were forced to sell, much below the value, a portion of what they brought, to purchase the right of sheltering the remainder within the walls of the capital. These unhappy creatures, as soon as they entered Paris, crowded the boulevards and public squares, and after having made a kind of encampment with their carts and cattle, ran about here and there, asking the news, retailing it, exaggerating it, and groaning at the roar of cannon, that proclaimed the ravage of their desolated farms. Over this people, so diversified, so confused, so distracted, hovered in a sort of distraction the strangest government in the world. The Empress-Regent, intensely alarmed for herself and her son, fearing at the same time the soldiers of her father, and the people over whom she had come to reign, no longer receiving from Cambacérès, who was stupified, the advice she was accustomed to, wrongfully distrustful of Joseph, who was kind and affectionate to her, but whom she had been made to regard as jealous of the Emperor, and consequently not knowing where to seek advice or support, she had been thrown by the sound of the cannon into a state of extreme alarm. Joseph was not frightened by the roar of the cannon, but beholding the thrones of his family falling one after another, he began to fear for that of France. It is true that, spurred on by the Emperor, he for a moment busied himself with the organization of the troops, without at all understanding the business; but he had neither the knowledge, nor the activity, nor the authority necessary to utilize the elements of resistance still existing in Paris. The War Min-

ister, Clarke, Duke of Feltre, industrious, but void of capacity, weak-minded, and almost an infidel, opposing in every point the Duke of Rovigo, whom he detested, was scarcely fit to execute half the orders of the Emperor, which referred almost exclusively to the active army. The Duke of Rovigo, intelligent and brave, but execrated as the instrument of a nearly-extinct tyranny, had lost all influence. The other ministers, mere officials, did not step beyond the circle of their functions, and in the present circumstances participated in the general consternation. In short, M. de Talleyrand, the only man capable, not of creating resources, for he had never meddled in the administration, but of giving good advice as to the best mode of proceeding, smiled at the embarrassment of all these personages, sneered at them, and repaid with contempt their distrust of him. Such was the confused assemblage of princes and ministers who were at this moment charged with the safety of France. Now were seen on every side the deplorable consequences of a policy that provided only for foreign conquest: magnificent fortifications, arms, and soldiers at Dantzig, at Hambourg, at Flushing, at Palma-Nova, at Venice, at Allessandria—and at Paris—nothing—absolutely nothing! Not a redoubt, not a soldier, not a musket, not even a government, and the sole resource to direct the bravest people in the world was a weeping wife, and brothers, not without courage, but without authority, because the State had been concentrated in the person of one man; and because this man was absent, thought, will, and action seemed paralyzed throughout France.

When, on the 28th March, the approaching arrival of the two marshals became known, and there being no longer any doubt as to the approach of the enemy, Joseph, who was the depository of Napoleon's instructions, both written and verbal, as to what was to be done with the Empress and the King of Rome, in case of an attack on Paris, communicated these instructions to the Empress, to the Chancellor Cambacérès, and the Minister Clarke; it never entered into the minds of either to disobey, though both Joseph and Cambacérès saw some strong objections against the prescribed measure. As to the Empress, she was willing to leave or to remain, as her husband pleased. It was agreed that a council of regency should be immediately summoned, to discuss the question, and draw from the members a resolution conformable to Napoleon's intentions, positively and repeatedly expressed.

The Council assembled on the evening of the 28th March, the Empress presiding. It consisted of Joseph, of the great functionaries, Cambacérès, Lebrun, Talleyrand, the ministers and presidents of the Senate, of the legislative corps and *the Conseil d'Etat*.

No sooner was the Council assembled at the Tuileries, than, with the permission of the Regent, the War Minister addressed the Assembly, and laid bare the situation of affairs in mournful and studied phrase. He said their sole remaining resources were the diminished corps of the Marshals Mortier and Marmont, some troops, obtained with difficulty from the depôts, a national guard of

12,000 men, of whom a part only had muskets, a populace willing to fight, but unarmed, some pallissades at the gates of the city, but no defensive works on the heights; in a word, 25,000 men, wholly unaided by art, and called on to oppose 200,000 veteran soldiers furnished with all the *matériel* of war. The minister accompanied this *exposé* with expressions of the most profound devotedness to the imperial family, and concluded by recommending the immediate departure of the Empress and the King of Rome for the Loire, where they would be beyond the reach of the enemy.

M. Boulay (de la Meurthe), who had listened impatiently to the War Minister, protested impetuously against such a proposition, and expatiated warmly on the self-evident disadvantages of such a project. He said it would be at the same time abandoning the capital and reducing the Parisians to despair, who looked on the daughter and grandson of the Emperor of Austria as a kind of Ægis; but should these seem only to consult their own safety, it would be inviting every one else to follow the example; that from that moment the defence of Paris would become impossible, that it would be tantamount to opening the gates to the enemy, and the departure of the government would create a void which a hostile party, supported by foreigners, would quickly fill, by proclaiming the Bourbons, as had happened at Bordeaux. M. Boulay (de la Meurthe), after having stated his opinions, proposed that Maria Louisa should imitate the example of her illustrious grandmother, Maria Theresa, that she should go to the Hôtel de Ville, with her son in her arms, and there make an appeal to the people of Paris, who, at need, could raise 100,000 soldiers to defend her.

This advice, to which there could be no objection, had there been a hundred thousand muskets to give the Parisians, and the government willing to trust them, was approved by the majority, especially by the Minister of Police, the Duke de Rovigo, and by the old Duke of Massa, who, notwithstanding his age and the impaired state of his health, opposed the departure of the Empress, with an eloquence that savoured of the vigour of youth. Even the sage and cool tempered Duke de Cadore grew warm, as he supported the proposition of staying at Paris and making a vigorous defence. Amid this general expression of opinion, that almost amounted to unanimity, Joseph, though appearing to side with those that opposed the proposition of leaving Paris, remained silent, and seemed as if paralysed by an invisible power. Prince Cambacérès, bowed beneath the weight of his vexations, was also silent. The Empress, powerully agitated, was silent, but her supplicating looks implored advice from all present.

M. de Talleyrand, with the authority inseparable from his name, spoke in turn, and expressed an opinion truly surprising to those who were aware of his secret relations. With that calm, graceful, and at the same time disdainful gravity that characterized his manner of speaking, he gave the soundest political advice, such, in fact,

as he might have enunciated had he been exclusively devoted to the Bonapartes. He laid little stress on the enthusiasm that might be awakened by conducting the Empress and the King of Rome to the Hôtel de Ville, he was too discriminating to put much faith in such resources, but he laid great stress on the danger of evacuating Paris. To evacuate the capital, was, in his opinion, to abandon it to the attempts that an adverse party would not fail to make at the first appearance of the allied armies. This adverse party, as every one knew, was that of the Bourbons The Allies, their great support, were drawing near. To abandon Paris, and remove Maria Louisa from the capital, would be to free the Allies from every difficulty they might encounter in effecting a revolution. Such was the general sense, though not the exact words, of the opinion expressed by M. de Talleyrand; and it was strange to hear a man who was to be the principal actor in the approaching revolution describe it so minutely beforehand.

People devoid of finesse, and who for that very reason suspect its existence in others, believed at this moment, and gave utterance to their opinion, that M. de Talleyrand had put forth this opinion in order that another might be adopted. This was a puerile error. M. de Talleyrand, called upon unexpectedly, had obeyed the dictates of his good sense, and gave the best possible advice. Moreover, the proposal of leaving annoyed him. To remain at Paris, after advising a departure, would put him in a serious difficulty; to leave would be to run the risk of all the vicissitudes that might befal the departing government, and remove to a distance from that which was approaching. In short, the advice to remain had an appearance of devotedness that might be useful, if Napoleon—whom the French would never believe utterly vanquished, until they heard of his death—should ultimately triumph. Having thus spoken conformably to the dictates of his understanding, and suitably to his particular circumstances, M. de Talleyrand was silent, and not a person present had the courage to offer an opinion after his. The question was put to the vote, and a considerable majority appeared in favour of those who disapproved the departure of the Empress and the King of Rome.

The result was scarcely announced when extraordinary anxiety was discoverable in the countenance of the Minister Clarke, and not less in the face of Prince Joseph, who, however, had visibly encouraged the opinion in favour of which the majority had decided. Then, as if under the influence of an imperative necessity, the War Minister rose, and pronounced a lengthy discourse, again recommending the departure of the Empress and the King of Rome. In support of his opinion he adduced reasons which, without being good, were the least bad that could be alleged. Paris was not everything, and ought not to be; and Paris once taken, it would be necessary to defend, *à outrance*, the rest of France, and dispute it obstinately with the enemy. It would be better to repair, with the Empress and the King of Rome, to the provinces that had not yet been in-

vaded, rally every patriotic Frenchman, and defend, to the last man, their native land and the Emperor's throne. But this prolonged struggle was not possible if, leaving the Empress and her son in the capital, they exposed them to the risk of falling into the hands of the allied sovereigns. This would be yielding up to the Emperor of Austria the precious pledge of his which they held; and if the people in any of the provinces were willing to raise the standard of resistance, they could not find any high personage round whom the devoted subjects of the empire could rally. Besides, the probability of seeing the enemy enter Paris was greater than was generally believed; for there was very little chance, with the resources they had, of resisting the 200,000 men that were marching on the capital.

The War Minister had taken all this trouble through a simple spirit of obedience. At bottom, he had no opinion on any subject. The arguments he brought forward he had drawn from historic recollections of cases of desperate resistance; these arguments, which were valid at Vienna under Maria Theresa, at Berlin under the great Frederic, but false at Paris, in the case of a vanquished soldier, did not convince anyone; for, without avowing it mentally, and without daring to express it openly, every one felt that with a government, itself the offspring of revolution, and that had ceased to be popular, and for which a substitute was ready prepared, to abandon the capital was to open the way for a revolution. Every one retained his opinion; and the sense of the assembly being again taken, it was found that the members were almost unanimous in declaring that Maria Louisa and the King of Rome ought to remain at Paris.

Then Joseph broke his prolonged silence, and the motive of his hitherto inexplicable conduct was revealed. He read two letters of the Emperor's—one dated from Troyes after the battle of la Rothière, the other from Reims after the battles of Craonne and Laon—in which Napoleon declared that on no account should his wife and son be allowed to fall into the hands of the Allies. We have already explained the feelings under which Napoleon wrote these two letters. Independent of the very sincere affection he bore his wife and son, he wished to keep in his hands a precious pledge; he also feared that Maria-Louisa might become the docile instrument of all that his enemies would contrive against him, especially by creating a regency that would exclude him from the throne. After the disquieting battle of la Rothière, this was his opinion, and he still held the same after the doubtful battles of Craonne and Laon. The two letters of the Emperor now produced were an overwhelming blow to the Council of Regency. Under the impulse of the moment, those whose opinions were negatived by the letters of the Emperor, exclaimed that it was very wrong to assemble a council when an order had been received from Napoleon, an absolute order, that did not admit of discussion. But reflection succeeding to the first emotion, they examined the letters, and disputed the use that was being made of them. The first had been written under circumstances very

different from the present, after the battle of la Rothière, when there appeared to be no chance of resisting the enemy. But since then, glorious triumphs mingled, it is true, with less agreeable events, had prolonged the war and rendered the result uncertain. The circumstances were, therefore, different, and Napoleon would not probably at the actual time give the same orders.

To this interpretation the second letter replied peremptorily. This letter was written at Reims the 16th March, the morrow of the successful battle of Reims, at the very time the Emperor was commencing his march towards the fortresses. The members were obliged to yield, and consent that the Empress should depart next day—the 29th. It was, however, resolved that Joseph and the ministers should remain in order to direct the defence of Paris, and not leave until it would be no longer possible to dispute this city with the enemy. The Chancellor Cambacérès, little suited to the tumult of arms, and being besides an adviser indispensable to the Empress, was to accompany her. The council broke up, and the members went their way confounded, and in a state of agitation unusual under this government, hitherto so obedient and peaceful. They broke out into recriminations, each imputing to the other the approaching ruin of the empire. Some of the more zealous members reproached the Duke of Rovigo with not having had recourse to the means that had saved France in '92—for example, with not having raised the people—to which he replied that he agreed with them; but in order to raise the people, he would have needed two things which he did not possess: in the first place, arms, and in the next permission to have recourse to such means. In descending the staircase of the Tuileries, M. de Talleyrand, who walked in the same fashion as he wrote, that is to say, slowly, said to the Duke of Rovigo, leaning on the cane on which he habitually supported himself—"Well, what an end to so glorious a reign! To finish his career like an adventurer, instead of terminating it peacefully on the greatest throne in the world, after having stamped the century with his name—what an end! The Emperor would be much to be pitied, had he not deserved his fate, by surrounding himself with such stupids!" The Duke of Rovigo, who had felt his own influence declining, and set no great value on those who had replaced him in the confidence of the Emperor, bowed his head and made no reply, he even appeared to approve the observations of M. de Talleyrand. The latter, with a look that solicited a little more confidence, added: "However, it will not suit every one to allow himself to be crushed under these ruins, and we ought to look to it." But, finding the Duke of Rovigo still silent, for though discontented, he was faithful, M. de Talleyrand finished the conversation with these simple words—"We shall see." He then stepped into his carriage, apprehensive that he had said too much.

After this meeting, whose consequences were so serious, Joseph, the Prince Cambacérès, and Clarke, in accompanying the Empress to her apartments, communicated to each other their opinions, and

acknowledged that the resolution to obey Napoleon presented serious difficulties. "But tell me," said Maria Louisa, "what I ought to do, and I will do it. You are very true counsellers, and you must teach me how to interpret the wishes of my husband." Prince Cambacérès, whose wisdom was now of little avail, and Joseph, who feared incurring any responsibility, dared not advise disobedience to the orders of Napoleon. However, they decided that before obeying, they would ascertain whether the danger was really so great as was believed, and whether the time was come for putting into execution, orders considered so dangerous. It was therefore resolved that Joseph and Clarke should the next morning make a military reconnaissance round Paris, and the Empress was not to leave until they should have pronounced a final opinion.

The next day—the 29th—the *Place du Carrousal* was filled with carriages belonging to the Court. These were loaded, besides the baggage of the Imperial family, with Napoleon's most valuable papers, the remains of his private treasure, that amounted to about eighteen millions, the greater part in gold, and lastly, the crown diamonds. A restless and discontented crowd had assembled, for Maria Louisa had appeared to many, a protection against the barbarity of foreigners. "These foreigners," said the multitude, "will not pillage, they will not burn, they will not destroy with bombs, the city that contains the daughter and grandson of the Emperor of Austria." The departure of Maria Louisa seemed a desertion, a kind of treason. Still the crowd remained inactive and mute. Some officers of the National Guard having succeeded in entering the palace—for in public calamities, etiquette yields to strong emotion—endeavoured to persuade Maria Louisa to remain, saying they were ready to defend her and her son to the last extremity. She replied, in tears, that she was only a woman, that she had no authority, that she was obliged to obey the Emperor; she thanked them for their offers of service, which she was neither able to refuse or accept. The unhappy woman (she was at that time really attached to the cause of her son and her husband) walked up and down through her apartments, weeping, expecting Joseph, who did not come, and not knowing what to say or what to do. At length, repeated messages having come from Clarke, announcing that the enemy's light cavalry already inundated the environs of the capital, she set off about midnight, overwhelmed with grief, bringing her son, who stamped with anger, demanding whither he was being carried. Whither he was being carried, unhappy child! To Vienna, where he was destined to die, without father, almost without mother, without country, and kept in ignorance of his glorious origin. Unhappy child, offspring of that strange destiny that united a soldier to the daughter of the Cæsars, and whose fate, next to the woes of France, is the most mournful history recorded in the annals of these extraordinary times.

The *cortège* of this terrified Court—sad example of human vicissitudes, calculated to scare the happy ones of the world—advanced

slowly towards Rambouillet, amid a discontented but silent crowd, who foresaw at this moment the future, as if it lay unveiled before them. Twelve hundred soldiers of the Old Guard escorted the fugitive court. This dreadful day of the 29th, the eve of one still more terrible, was devoted to making defensive preparations. Joseph had employed the morning, in company with several officers, in making a reconnaissance in the environs of Paris, which had delayed his replies to the Empress, and the result of his observations was, that with the actual disposable means, the capital could not be defended twenty-four hours. It is certain, that with the forces brought by the two marshals, with the depôts then at Paris, there were scarcely more than 22,000 or 23,000 men to oppose nearly 200,000. The National Guard amounted to 12,000, whom a sense of duty and detestation of foreigners would have converted into devoted soldiers, but there were not more than 3,000 or 4,000 who had muskets. Amongst the populace sinewy limbs could be found, and in the common danger they would not be wanting in good-will, but there were no weapons to give them. As to the defensive works, we have already said they consisted of some ill-armed redoubts, and some *tambours* before the gates, constructed *en palissades*, and without moats. Napoleon, however, had sent orders, unhappily in general terms, such as it was possible to send from a distance, and amid the multiplied movements of an active army. Besides, as the question was of an irregular resistance, maintained by any means within reach, nothing could be foreseen, nor orders given beforehand. Napoleon's own presence was needed, with his strong will, his activity, his inventive genius, his indomitable energy, to turn to advantage the resources that Paris possessed; the excellent but irresolute Joseph, the incompetent and vaccillating Duke de Feltre, were ill-fitted to supply his place in such circumstances. They were only impressed by the fact that they had 20,000 or 25,000 regular troops and that the enemy had 200,000. Certainly, the idea of a battle under such circumstances could only inspire despair; but nothing could be more stupid than the idea of giving battle outside the walls of Paris, for, the battle lost, and it was impossible it could be otherwise, everything was lost, the battle, Paris, the government, and France. Paris ought to be defended as General Bourmont had, a few days before, defended Nogent, as General Alix had defended Sens, as the Spaniards had defended their cities, as the Parisians themselves had too often defended Paris against their governments, with barricaded suburbs, with the populace drawn up behind the barricades, only reserving the regular army to fall on the points where the enemy might penetrate. For a resistance of this kind, there was no want of resources. The army, with the additions that might be made to the corps of the Marshals Marmont and Mortier, would amount to 24,000 or 25,000 men. There were 12,000 National Guards, to whom 5,000 or 6,000 muskets might be given, a number generally disposable out of the 30,000 or 40,000 under repair, and which

Clarke persevered in keeping for the active troops, which would have raised to 8,000 or 9,000 the number of the National Guards, regularly armed. The Parisians could at that time have furnished 50,000 or 60,000 volunteers, who could have found fowling-pieces, of which there was always a great number in the capital, which the zeal of the inhabitants would have induced them to present, and of which, in any case, the executive might have taken possession. Vincennes contained two hundred cannon of every calibre, and an immense supply of ammunition. With these the heights of Paris might be covered, and surely no one would have refused his horses for the service. By barricading the streets of the suburbs and the city; by placing the populace behind these barricades; by protecting, with artillery, certain select positions; by disposing the army on points where the enemy was most to be apprehended; or by throwing the regular forces from the heights on the flank of the invading columns as the configuration of the locality permitted, it was certainly possible to resist the entrance of the enemy into Paris at least for some days. The different localities, properly studied, would have offered resources that might have been turned to profit.

Everybody knows, either as an inhabitant or a visitor, the great capital, whose defence was now under discussion. An enemy advancing along the right bank of the Seine must of necessity encounter the half circle of heights that surrounds Paris from Vincennes to Passy, and which encloses the most populous and richest part of the city. From the confluence of the Marne and the Seine, near Charenton, to Passy and Auteuil, Paris is encircled by a chain of heights, sometimes extending *en plateau,* as at Romainville, sometimes saillant, as at Montmartre, and these offered a most valuable means of resistance, even before a patriot king had covered these positions with impregnable fortifications. To the south and east of this semi-circle (keeping still on the right bank of the Seine), are Vincennes, with its forest, its castle, and the encampments of Charonne, of Ménilmontant and Montreuil. Adverse forces on this side would be almost entirely cut off from all communication with any on the north-east, that is to say, in the plain of Saint-Denis, unless they had previously taken the precaution of seizing the plateau of Romainville. Should this precaution not be taken, a defensive force, well posted on the plateau of Romainville, could fall on the flank of an enemy coming by Vincennes, or on the flank of an invading column, crossing the plain of Saint-Denis with the design of attacking the barriers of Villette, Saint Denis, and Montmartre. This latter column, coming from the north-east across the plain of Saint-Denis, meets, of necessity, the hillock of Saint-Chaumont, the heights of Montmartre, of Etoile, and Passy, and should this column advance too far in the direction of Etoile, it would run the risk of being brought to a stand in the wood of Boulogne and thrown into the Seine, thanks to the retrograde sweep this river makes from Saint-Cloud to Saint-Denis.

The heights of Etoile, of Montmartre, of Saint-Chaumont, of

Romainville, being covered with strong redoubts and a great quantity of artillery, the city being barricaded and defended by the populace, part of the army being posted between the barriers most threatened by the enemy, but the bulk reserved to occupy the plateau of Romainville, a resistance, not invincible certainly, but prolonged for some days, might be opposed to the Allies, and give Napoleon time to manœuvre in their rear, and he had reckoned on this, not imagining that the defence of Paris would be limited to a single day, or in other words, to the number of hours that 25,000 men could sustain, in the open country, a combat against 200,000.

But the authorities at Paris had not thought of profiting of local advantages, nor of making use of the citizens; for Napoleon being absent, nobody was capable either of thinking or acting. Those to whom he had delegated his authority, scarcely possessed military courage—a quality in which Frenchmen are rarely deficient. Under Joseph, and under Clarke, who ought to have commanded, and who did not command, General Hutin was *chef de la Place* at Paris, and Marshal Moncey *chef* of the National Guards. Each of these busied himself, without holding communication with the other, with what specially concerned himself. General Hutin—a brave and patriotic man, but long accustomed to doze away his time at Paris, had immediately sent some pieces of cannon to the heights of Montmartre and the mound of St. Chaumont. Not being authorized to employ the horses of private persons, to transport the artillery from Vincennes, he had scarcely been able to drag to the heights some pieces of ordnance, fixed on badly finished *plates-formes*, ill supplied with munitions, or furnished with what did not suit the calibre of the guns. Marshal Moncey, always disposed to fulfil his duty, after having vainly demanded muskets for the National Guard, had at the last moment obtained the disposable 3,000, distributed them, and then drawn up the 6,000 National Guards he had succeeded in arming; some he placed behind the pallisades, erected at the barriers; the others he kept as a reserve, in order to send them to the points most threatened by the enemy.

As to the Marshals Marmont and Mortier, the Minister Clarke contented himself with prescribing a circuit outside Paris, as their field of operations, without examining whether it was advisable to fight a battle outside the walls of the capital. The right of this circuit he confided to Marmont, who would consequently have to defend the south and east of the heights—that is to say, the avenue of Vincennes, the barriers of Trône and Charonne, the plateau of Romainville, and a portion northward behind this plateau, as far as Prés Saint Gervais. He confided the left to Mortier, who was to defend the space between the canal of the Ourcq and the Seine—that is to say, the plain of Saint-Denis.

These two marshals, after all the combats they had sustained during their retreat, had not more than 12,000 men under their command. They were strengthened by General Compans, who had

escaped by a miracle, and who brought with him the Young Guard, recently organized at Paris, and the division Ledru des Essarts drawn from the depôts. He had about 6,000 bayonets. He was placed under the orders of Marshal Marmont. This division was commanded by General Michel, and was placed under the orders of Marshal Mortier. Thanks to this last reinforcement, the active forces of the two marshals amounted to 22,000 men. In their rear, 6,000 National Guards, some hundred veteran soldiers, and some young men in the artillery service, increased the number of the defenders of the capital to 28,000 or 29,000; and these brave men, as we have just seen, had for their defence, some pieces of cannon planted on the heights of Montmartre, of Saint Chaumont, and Charonne, and some pallisades in front of the barriers.

The marshals, who arrived on the evening of the 29th, had only time to see the War Minister, and converse a few moments with him, whilst their troops were taking a little indispensable repose. The confusion was so great that, though a sufficient quantity of provisions had been provided, the soldiers could scarcely get anything to eat. They were supported solely by the kindness of the inhabitants. The two marshals allowed them some repose, preparatory to leading them to the spot where they were to fight.

The allied sovereigns were, on the evening of the 29th, at the château of Bondy, and approaching Paris by the north-east, they resolved to attack it by the right bank of the Seine; for no enemy, unless compelled by extraordinary circumstances, would have joined to the natural difficulties of the attack that of an operation executed beyond the Seine, with the obligation to repass this river in case of failure. Being obliged to operate on the right bank of the Seine, the allied generals combined their efforts in a manner conformable to the nature of the locality. They decided to make three simultaneous attacks—one on the east, to be executed by Barclay de Tolly, with Rajeffsky's corps and all the reserves, about 50,000 men—their especial object being to carry, by Rosny and Pantin, the plateau of Romainville; one to the south, to second the proceeding executed by the Prince Royal of Wurtemburg with his own corps and that of Giulay (nearly 30,000 men), and which was to abut through the wood of Vincennes, at the barriers of Charonne and the Trône; lastly, a third, to the north, in the plain of Saint-Denis, executed by Blucher at the head of 90,000 men, and especially directed against the heights of Montmartre, Clichy and Etoile. Of these three columns, the most advanced in its march was that of Barclay de Tolly. That of Blucher, having come by the Meaux route, and having reached the Chaussée de Soissons, was on the evening of the 29th, farther from the rendezvous than the two others. The Prince de Wurtemberg, who had skirted the Marne, and had crossed it at an advanced stage of his march, was also *en arrière*. It was agreed that all should enter into action as soon as possible.

On our side, the Marshals Marmont and Mortier, having arrived

at a very late hour in the evening, and having passed the night between Charenton, Vincennes, and Charonne, were to advance in a southerly direction to occupy the heights. Marmont, with his troops, scaled the escarpements of Charonne and Montreuil, with the intention of establishing themselves on the plateau of Romainville, and on the north of this plateau as far as Prés Saint-Gervais. Mortier had a still greater distance to traverse. Ascending by the exterior boulevard from Charonne to Belleville, having afterwards to descend on Pantin, La Villette, and La Chapelle, he was ultimately to reach the plain of St. Denis, establish his right wing on the canal of the Ourcq, his left at Clignancourt, at the foot of the heights of Montmartre. He consequently required much more time to fall into line than Marmont. Happily he was to contend with Blucher, who was also *en retard*, so that he was certain of not being outstripped by the enemy.

Marmont, trusting too easily to the report of an officer, did not believe that the plateau of Romainville was occupied, and on this account had not hastened his march. When he arrived there, Rajeffsky's troops were already in possession. With 1,200 men of the Lagrange division, he threw himself on his vanguards, chased them from the plateau, and drove them back on Pantin and Noisy. At the same moment the Ledru des Essart's division took possession of the wood of Romainville, which covers the flank of the heights that border the plain of St. Denis. Marmont distributed his troops in the following manner. He had at his disposal one of the last divisions drawn from the Paris depôts, under the Duke of Padua, his ancient divisions Lagrange and Ricard, the troops that General Compans had brought the evening before, and lastly, some cavalry under Generals Chastel and Bordessoulle. He left his cavalry between Charonne and Vincennes, with orders to defend the foot of the heights on the north side, and to cover the barrier of Trône. He placed the Duke of Padua on his right, on the extreme edge of the plateau of Romainville, in the tallest houses of Bagnolet and Montreuil, that are built *en amphitheatre* on the southern declivity, that their fruit trees may enjoy the full rays of the sun. He drew up on the centre of the plateau the Lagrange division, backed by the houses of Belleville, the Ricard division on the left in the wood of Romainville, and lastly, on the northern declivity, the Ledru des Essarts division of Compan's corps. He placed at the foot, in the plain, at Prés Saint-Gervais, the Boyer de Rebeval division. The Michel division, that awaited Mortier to serve under his orders, guarded in his absence *la Grand* and *la Petite Villette*.

The sound of musketry and the roar of cannon, awakened, at an early hour, the Parisians, who, to say the truth, had slept little during the night, and Joseph, accompanied by the War Minister, the minister of police, engineer and artillery officers, had established his head-quarters at the summit of Montmartre.

Barclay de Tolly, though convinced that when the Prince Royal

of Wurtemberg on the south, and Blucher on the north, would fall into line, the contest would soon turn to the advantage of the Allies, still did not wish to leave the defenders of Paris, the first success of the day. He consequently resolved to retake the plateau of Romainville, and to employ for that purpose a part of his reserve. This reserve was composed of infantry, cavalry, and grenadiers. General Paskewitch was, with a brigade of the 2nd division of Grenadiers, to scale the plateau on the Rosny side; he was also to attack it on the south, advancing by Montreuil with the 2nd brigade of this 2nd division, and with Count Pahlen's cavalry. The 1st division of Grenadiers was confided to Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg, to attack Pantin and Prés Saint-Gervais, in the plain to the north.

This attack, conducted with vigour, was in the commencement successful. General Mezenzoff, who had been repulsed in the morning, now reinforced by the Grenadiers, remounted the plateau, spite of the Lagrange division, and succeeded in taking possession of it. On the right, the 2nd brigade of Grenadiers, after having turned the plateau by Montreuil and Bagnolet, forced the Duke of Padua's division, by outflanking them, to retrograde. We certainly lost ground, though the resistance of our soldiers was heroic, whether we consider the number or quality of the adverse troops, who were of the Allies' best.

However, though we lost ground, we kept the enemy in check. In fact, the Russian cuirassiers, led up on the plateau, tried to charge our infantry, but were covered with grape and stopped by our bayonets. In falling back from Romainville on Belleville, the Plateau growing narrower, our troops had the advantage of concentrating. On the right, we found a support in the houses of Bagnolet; on the left, in the wood of Romainville, and our soldiers, dispersing *en tirailleurs,* inflicted severe losses on the enemy. Our artillery profiting of the local advantages—for the plateau rises in retrograding towards Belleville—poured volumes of grape on the Russian grenadiers, and at each discharge overthrew entire lines. During this time, Ledru des Essart's young soldiers had reconquered, tree by tree, the wood of Romainville, and thus outflanked the Russian troops that occupied the wider portion of the plateau. At the very foot of the plateau, towards the north side, General Compans had remained master of Pantin, with the aid of the Boyer de Rebeval division; and kept Prés Saint-Gervais by the help of the Michel division. He had even driven beyond the two villages the Prince of Wurtemberg, who had attempted to take possession of them at the head of the first division of Grenadiers.

Marshal Mortier having at length taken up a position in the plain of Saint-Denis, had placed the Curial and Charpentier divisions of the Young Guard at La Villette, the Christiani division of the Old Guard at La Chapelle, and his cavalry at the foot of Montmartre itself.

It was ten in the morning, and if we had, independent of the

troops that covered the environs of Paris, a column of ten thousand veteran soldiers to take the offensive, we should have been able to give the Allies at this moment a severe check. But, far from being in a position to take the offensive, we had scarcely the means to defend our positions. In this state of things, Prince Schwarzenberg waiting his two wings that were *en retard*, and our two marshals being reduced to the defensive, both parties confined themselves to a cannonade and some sharpshooting, the superiority on our side being marked, owing to the zeal of our troops and the advantage of position.

At this hour Joseph was holding a council on the hillock of Montmartre, where he had fixed himself. Several officers, who had been sent to the marshals returned, with the assurance that they and their soldiers were determined to die to the last man, but added sad presentiments for the result of the contest, for they almost felt certain that the capital must be surrendered. This intelligence agitated Joseph deeply, who feared not the danger but the humiliation, and who dreaded above all things becoming the prisoner of the Allies. From the heights of Montmartre dark and voluminous masses, led on by Blucher, were seen to cross the plain of Saint-Denis, and officers coming from the neighbourhood of Vincennes asserted that they saw on the east and south a fresh army that was turning Paris, and trying to enter by the barriers of Charonne and Trône. All evidence, both visual and oral, concurred in announcing an imminent catastrophe. Joseph debated the subject with the ministers that had accompanied him, with the engineer and artillery officers, and all were of opinion that within a few hours Paris should be given up. In fact, the defence being reduced to a battle fought in the open plain, with odds of ten to one, of the result there could be no doubt, however brave our soldiers and generals might be. Confronted by such certainty, Joseph determined to withdraw. Having learned by reconnaissance that Cossacks were already seen advancing along the Revolte route and at the border of the *Bois de Bologne*, he hastily set off, ordering the ministers to follow, as had been agreed, when the last moment should have arrived. His sole instructions to the two marshals at parting were to continue the defence as long as possible, and then surrender on conditions that would guarantee the safety of Paris, and good treatment to the inhabitants.

During these proceedings the attack had made inevitable progress. On the north, that is to say, in the plain of Saint-Denis, Marshal Blucher had traversed the distance that separated him from our positions. General Langeron had driven our weak vanguards from Aubervilliers and Saint Denis, and sent his cavalry and light infantry by the road of La Revolte, as far as the edge of the Bois de Boulogne. The bulk of his infantry advanced towards the foot of Montmartre, whilst General d'York's corps, turning to the left (the left of the Allies) advanced on La Chatelle by the Saint Denis route, and the corps of Kleist and Woronzoff, turning still more to

the left, marched on La Villette. Prince Schwarzenberg, seeing Blucher in line, asked him to send a reinforcement to assist Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg to carry Pantin, Prés Saint-Gervais; in a word, all the villages situated at the foot of the Romainville plateau. The Kotzler Prussian division, the Prussian and Baden Guards, were then sent to the assistance of Rajeffsky's corps, and crossed the canal of the Ourcq, near the Rouvray Farm, to join in the first attack.

Whilst these movements were being executed to the north, the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg had, on the south, cleared the distance that separated him from the point of attack, and came to aid the Allies. After having crossed the bridge of Neuilly-sur-Marne, and left Giulay's corps to guard his rear, he had marched his forces in two columns, the one skirting the banks of the Marne, the other crossing by the shortest way the forest of Vincennes. The first column had carried the bridge of Saint-Maur, made a circuit of the forest, and attacked Charenton by the right bank. The National Guards of the neighbourhood who, with l'Ecole d' Alfort, defended the bridge of Charenton, finding themselves attacked in the rear, were forced, after a valiant resistance, to abandon the post, and march across the country to the left of the Seine. This adverse column having attained its object, which was to occupy all the bridges of the Marne, to hinder any auxiliary corps from coming to disturb the attack on Paris, began to *tirailler*, with the National Guard before the Bercy barrier. The Prince of Wurtemberg's second column had crossed the bridge of Vincennes in a straight line, and assisted Count Pahlen, as well as the troops of Rajeffsky and Paskewitch, who were engaged in attacking Montreuil, Bagnolet, and Charonne.

All the allied forces being now in line, the action recommenced with increased violence. To the north, Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg's division, assisted by the Russian grenadiers and by the Prussian troops recently arrived, fell on Pantin and Prés Saint-Gervais, but was warmly received by the Boyer de Rebeval and Michel divisions of the Young Guard, commanded by General Compans. For a moment, the Allies succeeded in seizing the two villages, but our young soldiers, planting their backs against the foot of the heights, where they were supported by a well-posted artillery, recovered their spirits, and again entered the villages, where the carnage became fearful. The enemy did not succeed on this side, notwithstanding the vigour of their attack.

The defence was not less energetic on the plateau of Romainville, but was less successful. The troops of Generals Helfreich and Mezenzoff, supported by the grenadiers of Paskewitch, though at first repulsed, had ultimately succeeded in taking the position. Having seized Montreuil and Bagnolet, they had established themselves on the southern declivity of the plateau, and being well seconded by the troops of Count Pahlen and the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, who were operating between Vincennes and Charonne,

they had taken possession of the nearest houses of Ménilmontant. The Duke of Padua's division of reserve, which formed Marmont's right, being outflanked, had been obliged to fall back, and leave uncovered the Lagrange and Ricard divisions that occupied the centre. On Marmont's left the Ledru des Essarts division briskly pushed from tree to tree in the wood of Romainville, at length lost the wood altogether.

Finding himself thus pressed on both flanks, Marmont conceived the idea of directing his centre against the enemy that was advancing in a serried mass, their front protected by artillery and the wings supported by strong detachments of heavy cavalry. The marshal put himself at the head of four battalions formed *en colonne d' attaque*, and charged the Russian Grenadiers that marched in the front line. Twelve pieces of cannon loaded with grape were discharged against our soldiers, who sustained the fire with heroic firmness and continued to advance. But they were at the same moment attacked in front by the Russian Grenadiers, and in flank by the Chevaliers-Gardes, led on by Miloradowitch.

Overpowered by numbers, Marmont's four battalions were obliged to fall back, after a hand to hand fight, sustained with positive fury. The Marshal fell back with his troops on Belleville, and was near sinking under the mass of assailants, both horse and foot, when a brave officer, named Ghesseler, ambushed on the right, in a little wood called "Bruyères," of which at present the memory alone remains, dashed at the head of 200 men on the flank of the adverse column, and by making a diversion in favour of the Marshal, succeeded in facilitating his retreat on Belleville. At the same moment the wood of Romainville was definitely abandoned; and the plateau being evacuated on every side, the defence was carried back—at the centre, on Belleville; on the right, towards Ménilmontant, which the Padua division had taken possession of; on the left, to the declivity of Beauregarde, where the Ledru des Essart division had found shelter. At the foot of the latter, the Boyer and Michel divisions struggled perseveringly. They had lost Pantin, but they defended Prés Saint-Gervais with intense obstinacy.

On every side the combat was furious; men fell by thousands, especially amongst the Allies, who received on all sides a plunging fire. In the plain of Saint-Denis, Kleist and Woronzoff had attacked la Vilette, defended by the Curial division; York attacked, before the eyes of Marshal Marmont, la Chapelle, defended by the Christiani division. In front of Clignancourt, Blucher's squadrons were engaged with General Belliard's cavalry, and seldom got the advantage.

Thus, from the plain of Saint-Denis to the barrier of Trône, the combat was prolonged with varying success. Our line had fallen back; but the Allies had already lost 10,000 men, whilst our loss amounted to only 6,000. Our worn-out soldiers were supported by the thought that Paris was in their rear, and 24,000 men struggled without extraordinary loss against 170,000. Once the arrival of

Napoleon was announced—it was the sudden appearance of General Dejean that had occasioned this false report—and the cry of *Vive l'Empereur!* propagated with electric rapidity, echoed from rank to rank. Our troops, reanimated by hope, rushed furiously on the enemy. On both sides the combat raged with a kind of madness;—for the one party was striving by a single stroke to attain the great object of the war, and the other was endeavouring to snatch their country from ruin.

At this time an event occurred at Vincennes which must ever redound to the honour of the youth of France. In the advance of the Trône barrier, there was a battery served by veteran soldiers and by pupils of the Polytechnic school, which Marmont, exclusively occupied with what was passing on the Romainville plateau, had left almost without support. This battery having advanced too far on the avenue of Vincennes in order to play on Pahlen's cavalry, was turned by some squadrons that, passing by Saint-Mandé, made an attack in the rear. The brave pupils of the School, standing unflinchingly by their guns, resisted valiantly, and were fortunately aided by the National Guard, posted at the Trône barrier, and by a detachment of dragoons. The latter rushing on the guns, succeeded in retaking them. The battery was brought back to the heights of Charonne; and there, assisted by a crowd of the populace armed with fowling pieces, our brave youths continued to pour a destructive fire on the enemy.

Belleville was the key of the position; as long as this point, which crowned the chain of heights, was not carried, the mass of enemies fighting on the north, in front of la Villette, la Chapelle, and Montmartre, and those that fought on the south, between Vincennes and Charonne, could make no serious progress. The curved line of the Allies was, as it were, stopped near the centre at a fixed point, which was Belleville. Belleville, in fact, commanded the Romainville plateau itself. Numerous *clôtures*, joined to the advantage of the position, rendered resistance there more easy. Marmont, established on this spot with the *débris* of the Lagrange, Ricard, Padua, and Ledru des Essarts divisions, having besides at his command a large quantity of field artillery, kept his ground against numerous assailants, and sent word to Joseph, who had authorised the marshals to negotiate, that he did not yet feel himself obliged to surrender. The marshals' officer, who carried the message, found that Joseph had set off before he arrived, and he returned without having been able to fulfil his mission.

Meanwhile, the fatal hour was drawing nigh. Prince Schwarzenberg, not wishing to terminate the day without having carried the decisive point, ordered two attacking columns to advance, one towards the south, passing between Ménilmontant and the cemetry of Père la Chaise, was to take possession of the exterior boulevard, and so separate Belleville from the enceinte of Paris; the other column advancing to the north was ordered to seize, at any expense, Prés Saint-Gervais, la Petite-Villette, and the hillock of

Saint-Chaumont, and finish by joining the other column, coming from the south.

To conquer or perish was at this moment the fixed determination of the Allies, and it behoved them to overcome every obstacle without loss of time, for there was a possibility of Napoleon's arriving at any moment, and had he found the Allies repulsed from Paris, condign would have been their punishment for having dared to appear before the walls. About three in the afternoon the action re-commenced, furiously. Brigadier Paixhan's artillery, who proved on this day what can be done with well-posted heavy artillery, had placed eight guns of heavy calibre beyond Charonne, on the declivity of Ménilmontant, four on the north reverse of Belleville, and eight on the hillock of Saint-Chaumont. He took his place beside his cannon, charged with grape, accompanied by his gunners—some, veteran soldiers, others, youths from the schools, and waited until the enemy, who were masters of the plain, should essay to ascend the heights. In fact the Russian Grenadiers advanced, some to the south of the plateau, by Charonne, others marched straight to the plateau, in front of Belleville, and others approached the same point by the north, through Prés Saint-Gervais. Suddenly they are covered with grape; entire lines are overthrown. However, they sustain the fire steadily, and ascend on the south, the declivities of Ménilmontant, and passing by the exterior boulevard, attack Belleville in the rear; Belleville, where Marshal Marmont is desperately defending himself. The other division of Grenadiers who, with the Prussians and the Badeners, were attacking Pantin, Prés Saint-Gervais, and Petite-Villette and had snatched them from the Boyer and Michel divisions, now almost destroyed, ascended the hillock of Saint-Chaumont under the plunging fire of Brigadier-General Paixhan's batteries, carried the hillock, which, for want of troops, was not defended by infantry, and joined the column that arrived from the south, by Charonne and Ménilmontant. The enemy, having reached the exterior boulevard by the northern and southern declivities, succeeded in establishing themselves between Belleville and the barrier of that name, which they nearly carried.

On receiving intelligence of these events, Marshal Marmont, who had throughout kept his ground at Belleville, seeing himself cut off from the enceinte of Paris, assembled his remaining forces, and, supported by Generals Pelleport and Meynadier and Colonel Fabvier, rushes, sword in hand, on the Russian Grenadiers who begin to enter the high street, of the Temple Faubourg. He drives them back, closes the barrier against them, and resumes the defence at the *octroi* wall.

Mortier, on his side, struggled heroically in the plain of Saint-Denis, between la Villette and la Chapelle. La Villette, on his right, defended against Kleist and d'York, by the Curial and Charpentier divisions, was at length invaded by a host of enemies. At this spectacle Mortier, who occupied la Chapelle, with the Christiani

division of the Old Guard, takes a part of this division, and making a movement from left to right, entered Villette at the point of the bayonet, and succeeded in driving out the Prussian Guard, after a fearful carnage. But soon, fresh masses of the enemy, attacking Grande-Villette in the rear, by the canal of the Ourcq, and entering between la Villette and la Chapelle, Mortier is forced to abandon the plain and fall back on the barriers. At the same instant, Langeron advances towards the foot of Montmartre. Langeron, a Frenchman, leads the enemy against Paris! Advancing towards Montmartre, he expects to be enveloped in clouds of grape, but is surprised to find these heights silent; he ascends and seizes the few pieces of artillery that had been placed there, and which were feebly guarded by some of the sapper brigade. He marches afterwards to the Clichy barrier, which the National Guards, before Marshal Moncey's eyes, were bravely defending, and with a courage that proves what aids might have been obtained from the Parisian populace.

Such was the termination of two-and-twenty years of unprecedented triumphs, whose scenes of action had been successively Milan, Venice, Rome, Naples, Cairo, Madrid, Lisbon, Vienna, Dresden, Berlin, Warsaw, Moscow, and which now closed so disastrously before the walls of Paris.

No preparations having been made for a prolonged defence, by barricaded streets, and the population drawn up behind the barriers, with troops in reserve; the sole defence having consisted in a battle fought outside the walls of Paris with a handful of soldiers, against a formidable army, and that battle being inevitably lost, it was not to be supposed that the wall *d'octroi* could now stop the enemy's progress. It was better to spare Paris an unprofitable misfortune. Marmont, seeing no other resource, thought the time was come for using the powers conferred by Joseph on the two marshals commanding the army outside Paris, and had successively sent two officers to Prince Schwarzenberg to propose a suspension of arms. The battle raged with such fury that one of the delegates had not been able to cross to the enemy's quarters, and the other had been wounded. Marmont then sent a third.

At this moment General Dejean arrived all breathless, to announce that Napoleon, learning that the Allies had marched on the capital, had changed his course, and was advancing in all haste to Paris, that if the marshals could only hold out two days, they would see him appear at the head of considerable forces; that they ought, therefore, to resist at any cost, and when they could no longer resist, they should endeavour to cajole the enemy by parleying. In fact Napoleon, in this extremity, the Congress of Châtillon being dissolved, had written to his father-in-law for the purpose of resuming the negotiations, and authorised him to say so to Prince Schwarzenberg, in order to obtain some hours' suspension of arms. Marshal Mortier received General Dejean amid a hail of projectiles, and pointing out to him the *débris* of his divi-

sions, which still disputed the possession of la Villette and la Chapelle, he quickly convinced him of the impossibility of prolonging this species of resistance. It was evident there was nothing left to do but to apply to Prince Schwarzenberg, and the marshal accordingly wrote him a few words on a drum-head pierced with balls. He said that Napoleon resumed negotiations on bases that the Allies could not reject, and that, *en attendant,* it was desirable, for the sake of humanity, to stop the effusion of blood.

An officer, bearer of this letter, set off at full gallop, crossed the ranks of both armies, and succeeded in reaching Prince Schwarzenberg. The latter replied that he had received no intelligence of the resumption of negotiations, and could not, in the absence of such information, stop the battle, but he was willing to suspend the butchery on the immediate surrender of Paris. At the same moment, the third officer, sent by Marshal Marmont, having succeeded in obtaining an interview with the generalissimo, and having announced that the marshals, in order to save Paris, were ready to sign a capitulation, the parley assumed a more serious turn, and a meeting with the two marshals was appointed at La Villette. They repaired there, and found M. de Nesselrode, with several plenipotentiaries. Without losing a moment, the question of a suspension of hostilities was entered on. Divers pretensions were at first put forward by the representatives of the allied armies. They demanded that the troops who had defended Paris should lay down their arms. A movement of indignation was the sole reply vouchsafed by the two marshals. Then the adverse delegates reduced their demands to requiring the two marshals to retire into Brittany with those troops, in order that they might not exercise any influence on the sequel of the war. The marshals again answered in the negative, and demanded permission to retire where they pleased. These demands were acceded to, provided they evacuated the city that night. This condition was accepted, and it was agreed that some officers should meet in the evening to regulate the details of the evacuation of the capital.

Such was the celebrated capitulation of Paris, which cannot be reasonably condemned, for it was a matter of necessity on the part of the marshals. They had certainly done all that could be expected of them, since with 23, or 24,000 men they had, during an entire day, held their ground against 170,000, of whom 100,000 were actually engaged, and 6,000 of their troops were put *hors de combat,* they killed or wounded double that number of the enemy. Let us imagine what would have happened if Paris, holding out three or four days longer against the Allies, they had been surprised by Napoleon in their rear, at the head of 70,000 soldiers! And that it was not thus—whom shall we blame, if not in the first place Napoleon, who, having decided too late, to avow his real position, had not got the necessary defensive works executed under his own inspection round Paris! he who, scattering his resources from Alexandria to Dantzig, had not 50,000 muskets to give the Parisians; and after the Emperor, we must blame those who, delegated to represent him

in his absence, had displayed so little activity, intelligence, and energy, and had reduced the defence of the capital to a battle of 24,000 men against 170,000!

In negotiating for their *corps d'armée*, the two marshals had not been able to make any stipulation relative to the city of Paris and the Government that resided within its walls, for they had neither the powers nor the mission to do so. Moreover, all the ministers had retired with Joseph. The Duke of Rovigo, faithful to what had been agreed on—for it was arranged that the ministers should follow the Empress-Regent when Paris should be no longer tenable—had set out, leaving the two prefects—one of whom directed the administration of the capital, and the other the police—the care of maintaining tranquillity in the city. There was consequently no longer a government; and the void, whose ill effects had been so frequently pointed out by those that opposed the departure of the Empress-Regent, was at length created.

The man destined soon to fill this void—M. de Talleyrand, whom by a secret instinct Napoleon had foreseen as the author of his fall, and whom the public, by an instinct as correct, looked upon as the necessary author of an approaching revolution,—M. de Talleyrand found himself at this moment in a state of extreme perplexity. In virtue of his rank as Grand Dignitary, he ought to follow the Regent; but by leaving, he rejected the great part that awaited his acceptance; and by not leaving, he exposed himself to be taken in an overt act of treason, which might involve serious consequences, if Napoleon, by a sudden stroke of good fortune—always possible in his case—should reappear as conqueror before the gates of the capital. To extricate himself from this embarrassment, he sought an interview with the Duke of Rovigo to obtain permission to remain at Paris, saying that, in the absence of the entire government, he would be able to render important services. The Duke of Rovigo, suspecting that these services would be rendered to some other than to Napoleon, refused the desired permission, which, in fact, he had not power to accord. M. de Talleyrand sought the prefects, but could not obtain what he desired; and not knowing how to cover with a specious pretext his prolonged stay at Paris, he took the resolution of stepping into his carriage, and affect at least a willingness to follow the Regent. Towards the close of the day, as the battle ceased to rage, he presented himself, without passport and with great travelling pomp, at the barrier leading to the Orleans route. The barrier was occupied by the National Guards, highly irritated against those who, during the past two days, had deserted the city. A kind of tumult was raised about M. de Talleyrand's carriage; some contemporaries regard this as a national outburst, others believe it to have been pre-arranged. His passport was demanded; he had none; a murmur was raised against this neglect of an essential formality; and then, with an affected deference to the opinion of the brave defenders of Paris, he retraced his steps and returned to his mansion. The greater part of those who

contributed to detain him, and who were not desirous of a revolution, little suspected they had detained the man who was about to effect one.

Not being fully satisfied as to the formality of his conduct, M. de Talleyrand repaired to the house of Marshal Marmont, who, the battle now over, had hastened to his dwelling, situate in the *Faubourg Poissonnière*. People of every class flocked thither, seeking, on some side, a government, and crowding round the man who, at this moment, seemed to represent one, since he was head of the only force existing in the capital. Marshal Mortier was subordinate to him on all important occasions. The two prefects, a portion of the municipal body, and several distinguished personages were present. Every one spoke of the late events with emotion, and according to his individual sentiments. Seeing the marshal, whose face was blackened with powder and his coat rent by balls, the assembly felicitated him on his courageous defence of Paris, and then proceeded to talk of the situation of affairs. There was a species of unanimity in condemning what they called the cowardly desertion of those that Napoleon had left in the capital to defend it, and against Napoleon himself, whose mad policy had brought the armies of Europe to the foot of Montmartre. The royalists—and there was a considerable number present—did not hesitate to say that the French ought to throw off an insupportable yoke, and boldly named the Bourbons. Two influential bankers, M. M. Peregaux and Lafitte, the one connected by the ties of blood, the other by those of friendship, with the Duke of Ragusa, attracted attention by the vivacity of their language. The second especially, whose secular success had just commenced, and whose versatile and brilliant talents had attracted general attention, spoke strongly, and went so far as to exclaim, on hearing the name of the Bourbons pronounced: "Well, be it so, give us the Bourbons, if you wish, but with a constitution that will guarantee us against a fearful despotism, and with peace, of which we have been so long deprived." This unanimity of feeling against the imperial despotism, carried so far as to make the upper bourgeoisie consider the Bourbons, with whom they had never come in contact, very acceptable, produced an extraordinary impression on all present. It was suggested in the assembly that they ought not to think exclusively of the army, that the capital too, ought to engage their attention. Marshal Marmont replied that he was not empowered to treat for the capital; it was therefore thought proper that the prefects, with a deputation from the Municipal Council and the National Guard should be deputed to wait on the allied sovereigns, and demand from them that treatment to which Paris had a right from civilized princes, who, since the passage of the Rhine, had announced themselves as the liberators, and not the conquerors of France.

Whilst these discussions were at the height, M. de Talleyrand arrived. He had a private conversation with Marshal Marmont,

He wished at first to obtain something resembling an authorization of his stay at Paris, the which no person was less in a position to grant than the marshal; but he began to set less value on this permission when he saw what was passing around him. He instantly conceived the idea of making this visit facilitate a *denouement* which he now began to regard as inevitable, and which should, of necessity, be accomplished by him. No man was more open to flattery than Marshal Marmont, and none knew better than M. de Talleyrand how to administer the draught. The Marshal had, during this campaign, committed serious errors, but discoverable only by military men, whilst he had, at the same time, displayed heroic bravery. On this very day especially, the 30th March, he had acquired lasting claims on the gratitude of his country. His face, his hands, his dress bore testimony to what he had done. M. de Talleyrand praised his courage, his talents, and especially his understanding, very much superior, as he affirmed, to that of the other marshals. The Duke of Ragusa, as usual, became very much elated when told that he was endowed with high intelligence, in which his fellow-commanders were deficient, and it must be acknowledged, that in this respect, he possessed what they could lay no claim to. He listened, consequently, with a sentiment of profound satisfaction to what the arch tempter, who was preparing his ruin, told him. M. de Talleyrand took some trouble to point out the serious position of affairs, and the necessity of extricating France from the hands that had destroyed her; he gave the marshal to understand that under existing circumstances, a soldier who had defended Paris so gloriously, and who had still under his command the men at whose head he had fought, possessed the means of saving his country, which had now no master. M. de Talleyrand went no further, for he knew that no person is seduced at a first attempt. He took his departure, and left the unfortunate Marmont intoxicated with vanity; and now, amid the disasters of France he sketched for himself, in imagination, the most brilliant destiny, whilst the simple-minded and upright soldier, who had been his colleague, on this same 30th March, Mortier, whose face, too, was blackened with powder, devoured his grief in the loneliness to which his modesty and uprightness consigned him.

Night was already advanced; the officers, chosen by the marshals, were about arranging with Prince Schwarzenberg's representatives the details of the evacuation of Paris; the two prefects, with a deputation, selected from the members of the Municipal Council and officers of the National Guards, left the Hôtel de Ville for the Château of Bondy, where they intended to make an appeal to the better feelings of the victorious sovereigns.

At this very moment Napoleon arrived before the gates of Paris. We have already seen that, on the 23rd March, he stopped in the neighbourhood of Saint-Dizier, to give his troops some rest, and

collect the garrisons that were to reinforce his army. On the 24th and 25th he operated diverse movements between Saint-Dizier and Vassy, still flattering himself that he had drawn Prince Schwarzenberg after him, and in this belief he was confirmed by the reports of his lieutenants, who, still retaining the impression received on the day of Arcis-sur-Aube, fancied they saw on every side innumerable masses of the enemy. Napoleon had determined to ascertain the exact state of things, by profitting of the first opportunity to reconnoitre closely the numerous troop of cavalry that followed in his track. Meanwhile, M. de Caulaincourt, inconsolable that the negotiations had been broken off, insisted that an effort should be made to resume them, which Napoleon seemed little inclined to do. A favourable circumstance had, however, occurred, and M. de Caulaincourt had done himself a sort of violence to turn it to profit. General Piré, reconnoitring with the light cavalry, had taken prisoners Baron de Wessenberg and M. de Vittrolles himself, who was returning from his mission to the Count d'Artois, and who, happily for him, was not recognised. M. de Caulaincourt, seconded by Berthier, had succeeded in obtaining the liberation of M. de Wessenberg, and sent him with a letter to Prince Metternich, in which M. de Caulaincourt declared that Napoleon was at length resigned to make great sacrifices, without, however, saying what they were. It was all that M. de Caulaincourt had been able to obtain from his master, though he would have wished to be more precise in these new overtures, in order that they might be better received. M. de Wessenberg, having been set free on condition of fulfilling the mission, undertook it, and, passing M. de Vittrolles for one of his servants, saved him from imminent danger.

An opportunity of making a close reconnaissance having offered on the 26th, Napoleon took care to profit by it. Whilst he was between Saint Dizier and Vassy, on the left of the Marne, filling the entire country between the Marne and the Aube with his troops, he perceived a vast number of cavalry on the right bank of the Marne, a little above Saint Dizier, in the direction of Vitry. At the sight of the enemy appearing in force, there was no time for hesitation; it was necessary to advance, in the first place, to give battle, and in the second place, to learn who the enemy might be. Notwithstanding the serious disadvantage of crossing a river in presence of troops drawn up in line of battle, the French marched straight to the Hœricourt ford, and crossed the Marne *en masse*, at that point, with the exception of Oudinot's corps, that was sent a little higher up, to cross at Saint Dizier. The enemy was embarrassed on discovering they had to do with the entire French army. Still, the enemy had ten thousand horse, and some thousand light infantry, that charged us at the moment we were crossing the Marne. They got the reception they deserved. The cavalry of the Guard, after a sharp contest with the enemy's squadrons, routed them completely. They were obliged to fall back, and Wintzingerode, for it was he, seeing that he had imprudently implicated

himself, determined to regain the Bar-sur-Aube route, notwithstanding the disadvantage of defiling within range of Saint Dizier, of which Oudinot had taken possession. We charged, *à outrance*, the retreating enemy, and whilst they were sharply attacked in the rear, they were at the same time taken in flank by our infantry, that debouched by Saint Dizier. Two battalions of infantry, having in vain attempted to form in square, the brave Letort rushed on them at the head of the Dragoons of the Guard, and cut them in pieces. The impetuosity of the charge was such, that the dragoons continued their course, without regarding the Russian infantry that they had broken and ridden past. The latter, who had feigned to yield, seeing the dragoons pass, tried to form again into line, and fired on them from the rear. Our horse, retracing their steps, cut them down without mercy. This pursuit lasted till night, and our troops returned to Saint Dizier, after having killed or made prisoners four thousand of Wintzingerode's rear-guard, that had been sent to follow and deceive us. We captured, besides, thirty pieces of cannon. This victory only cost us three or four hundred men. A brilliant trophy—the last, alas! of this heroic and fatal campaign.

The next day, the 27th, Napoleon having learned that the enemy still held Vitry, approached to take the place, but an old wall and a moat filled with water, were obstacles that presented some difficulty. Macdonald, whom our late misfortunes had irritated, made the remark to Napoleon with some bitterness, and an altercation on the subject ensued between them, when one of the enemy's bulletins, seized by our soldiers, was brought. This bulletin related, after the enemy's fashion, the fatal battle of Fère-Champenoise. This missive, though the date was incorrect, proved beyond all doubt that the Allies had marched on Paris. After the sad confirmation of this fact, obtained from some prisoners, Napoleon returned to Saint Dizier, deeply touched by this intelligence, and still more deeply affected by the impression produced on those about him. Spirits already restless, thinking of what might have happened since they left for Lorraine, no longer restrained themselves, when they heard that the Allies had marched on Paris; they burst out with a species of fury against the mad obstinacy of Napoleon, to whom, since the return of M. de Caulaincourt, they attributed the breaking off of the negotiations. They did not hesitate to say, that, having caused the destruction of part of the army in this campaign, he was now about to cause the destruction of the capital itself, and that whilst he was fighting uselessly in the rear of the Allies, they would perhaps avenge the burning of Moscow by setting Paris in flames. The commotion soon became so great, as to call for interference, and the following day, the 28th, Napoleon deliberated, in company with Berthier, Ney, and Caulaincourt, what was to be done. Could they only have known that Paris was beyond help, and that the best course was to persevere in a project, hazardous certainly, but which now offered the only remaining chance of safety —that of allowing the Allies, to effect a revolution in the capital,

and fall upon their rear with the 120,000 men that Napoleon could have assembled. But entertaining the hope that Paris was not utterly lost, it was natural to march thither as quickly as possible; and since Napoleon had not succeeded in turning the allied generals from the capital by his last movement, he might at least endeavour to surprise them at the moment when they should be engaged before the walls of the great city, and fall upon them like a thunder-crash.

Such were the sentiments of Ney and Berthier, and they warmly maintained their opinion. So strong was the general feeling, that to hasten to Paris was become a universal passion.

Napoleon, who was not led by emotion, thought differently. He had marched towards the fortresses to strengthen his army, and return at the head of 100,000 men, a force that, under his command, would make the Allies tremble. Paris being taken, or in danger of being taken, was not a sufficient reason for being turned from this great object; for no sooner would the Allies know of his being at the head of such a force, than they would hasten to quit Paris, or if they remained, pay dearly for the satisfaction of having appeared there for a moment. Napoleon attached little importance to the idea of a political revolution, because that, spite of his sagacity, he had never realized to himself the discredit into which his government had fallen. He saw things only from a military point of view; and under this aspect, he thought it more important to have 100,000 at his command, than to save Paris. However, unsupported in his opinion, accused of insane obstinacy, he was obliged to soothe the universal affliction, by giving up his own opinion and resolving to assist the capital. But if he were to go there at all, it would be necessary to march there immediately, as, in order to arrive in time, there was not a moment to lose. Napoleon took his resolution instantly, and set out that very hour, crossing straight from the Marne to the Aube, from the Aube to the Seine, in order to reach Paris by the left bank of the latter river, and so avoid encountering the allied armies.

Having left Saint-Dizier on the 28th, he passed the night with the army at Doulevent, and resumed his march on the 29th, crossed the Aube at Dolancourt, and slept at Troyes, leaving in the rear his army, that could not travel distances as rapidly as he. *En route*, he received a message from M. de Lavallette, informing him of the danger of the capital, the mass of enemies that threatened Paris from without, and the activity of plots that threatened it from within. On receiving this message, Napoleon hastened his march. On the morning of the 30th he reached Villeneuve-l'Archevêque, and there, ceasing to march in military fashion, wishing to encourage the Parisians by his presence, he travelled post, sometimes on horseback, sometimes in a miserable chariot, and thus, accompanied by M. de Caulaincourt and Berthier, he advanced towards Paris. He sent forward, as we have seen, General Dejean, to announce his arrival, and earnestly urge the mar-

shals to prolong their resistance. About midnight, having travelled at full speed the entire day, either on horseback or *en voiture*, he at length reached Fromenteau, all-impatient to know what was going on. A large number of cavalry was seen advancing, preceded by some officers. Without hesitation Napoleon called these officers. "Who goes there?" he asked. "General Belliard," replied the leader. It was, in fact, General Belliard, who, in compliance with the conditions of the capitulation of Paris, was going to Fontainebleau, to find a suitable position for the troops of the two marshals. Napoleon sprang from his carriage, seized General Belliard by the arm, led him to the roadside, and overwhelmed him so with questions that he had scarcely time to reply. "Where is the army?" said he, immediately. "Sire, the army is coming up." "Where is the enemy?" "At the gates of Paris." "And who occupies Paris?" "Nobody: it is evacuated." "What, evacuated? and my son—my wife—my government—where are they?" "On the Loire." "On the Loire! who counselled such a proceeding?" "But, sire, it was said to be in obedience to your orders." "My orders had no such meaning: but Joseph—Clarke—Marmont—Mortier, what has become of them? what have they done?" "Sire, we have not seen either Joseph or Clarke the entire day. As to Marmont and Mortier, they have behaved like honest men. The troops have acted admirably. Even the National Guards, wherever they were exposed to fire, vied with the soldiers. They bravely defended the heights of Belleville as well as the opposite declivity, looking towards Villette. They even defended Montmartre, where there were only a few pieces of cannon, and the enemy, believing the place to be better defended, sent a column along the Revolte route to turn Montmartre, thus running the risk of being driven into the Seine. Ah, sire! had we had a reserve of ten thousand men—had you been there, we would have thrown the Allies into the Seine, saved Paris, and avenged the honour of our country!" "Undoubtedly, had I been there; but I cannot be everywhere! And Clarke, and Joseph, where were they? And my two hundred Vincennes cannon, what has been done with them? And my brave Parisians, why were not they called into action?" "We do not know, sire. We were alone, and we did our best. The enemy lost at least twelve thousand men." "I ought to have expected it," cried Napoleon. "Joseph lost me Spain, and now he loses me France. I ought to have believed that poor Rovigo, who told me that Clarke was a coward, a traitor, and, moreover, a stupid. But let us have done with complaints, we must repair the evil. Caulaincourt—my carriage."

Having finished these words, Napoleon began to walk in the direction of Paris, ordering every body to follow him, as if he could thus gain time. But Belliard and the others endeavoured to dissuade him. "It is too late," said Belliard, "to go to Paris; the army has been obliged to leave, the enemy will soon arrive, if they are not already there." "But," replied Napoleon, "I shall lead on

the army again, and drive the enemy out of Paris; my brave Parisians will hear my voice, and they will all rise and drive the barbarians beyond their walls." "Ah, sire, it is too late; the infantry is even now following me—besides, we have signed a capitulation that forbids our return." "A capitulation; and who has been so cowardly as to sign one?" "Honest men, sire, who had no alternative."

During this colloquy, Napoleon is still advancing, refusing to listen to any remonstrance, and calling for his carriage, which Caulaincourt does not bring, when an infantry officer is seen advancing. It was Curial. Napoleon calls him, and then learns that the infantry is on the spot—that is to say, three or four leagues distant from Paris, and that the time for returning to the capital is past. Conquered by facts, by the explanations he receives, Napoleon pauses at the two fountains that rise on the Juvisy route, sits beside the waters, covers his face with his hands, and remains some time plunged in profound reflection.

All present are silent; they look at each other; they wait anxiously the result of the Emperor's meditations. At length he rises, and asks to be shown some place where he can find a few moments' shelter. He had travelled without cessation thirty leagues *en voiture*, and thirty on horseback; he was worn out with fatigue, but he seemed unconscious of exhaustion. He asked for a table and lights; he wanted to look at his maps, and give orders. A messenger is despatched to the neighbouring post-master, a light is brought, and the Emperor's face becomes visible. His features exhibit some traces of his late emotion, but no disturbance of mind —the prevailing expression is invincible energy.

The maps are spread; he examines them; he reflects, and then says—"If I had the army here all would be set right! Alexander is going to show himself to the Parisians. He is not badly inclined; he has no desire to burn Paris; he only wishes to show himself in this great city. To-morrow he will hold a review; he will have one portion of his troops on the right of the Seine, another on the left. Some will be in Paris, some outside, and in that position, if I had my army, I would crush them all. The people would join me. They would fling every available missile on the heads of the Allies. The peasants of Burgundy would finish the work. Not one of them should return to the Rhine. The greatness of France would be restored. If I had the army! But my troops will not arrive for three or four days. Ah! why did not Paris hold out some hours longer?" And as he uttered these words Napoleon walked up and down the small room, which was scarcely large enough to hold him and the few witnesses of this strange scene. In order to calm him M. de Caulaincourt said: "But, Sire, the army will come, and in four days your Majesty can do what you would do to-day." Napoleon who, up to this moment, seemed neither to hear or understand what was said to him, suddenly raised his head and walked straight up to M. de Caulaincourt, and he, who had never appeared

to admit the possibility of a revolution, exclaimed: "Ah! Caulaincourt, you do not know men. Three days; two days; you do not know what may be done in that short time. You know not all the intrigues that will be plotted against me. You know not how many there are who will abandon me. I could name them for you if you wish. Listen; the people say that I have ordered the Empress and my son to leave Paris. It is true; but I cannot explain everything. The Empress is a child. They would make use of her against me, and God knows what acts they would force her to commit. But let us forget these trifles. Three days, four days; 'tis very long. However, the army will arrive, and if I am properly seconded France may be saved." Napoleon relapsed into silence, sank into thought; he took a few rapid steps, then, in a tone of inspiration he exclaimed: "Caulaincourt, I have our enemies trapped. God will deliver them up to me. I shall annihilate them in Paris, but I must gain time. You must help me to gain it." Then, intimating that he wished to be alone he remained with M. de Caulaincourt, to whom he explained his plan, which was as follows:—M. de Caulaincourt was to go to Paris to visit Alexander, by whom he would be well received. He should appeal to the recollections of this Prince, seek to awaken his old sentiments, point out the dangers that threatened him in this great capital, especially when Napoleon, approaching with 60,000 men, would be joined by the 20,000 that were leaving Paris, all burning for revenge, and wishing at any time to redeem the honor of our arms. These ideas must have already presented themselves to the imagination of Alexander, but would doubtless produce still more effect when placed before his eyes by another. If in this disposition of mind an immediate offer of peace were made to him on conditions nearly the same as those of Châtillon he would not compromise his triumph, he would lend a willing ear, he would send M. de Caulaincourt to the French head-quarters. M. de Caulaincourt would go and return. Three or four days would soon pass, and then, added Napoleon, I should have the army, and all would be set right. "But, sire," replied M. de Caulaincourt, "would not that be an opportunity of negotiating seriously and submitting to events, if not to men, and to accept the Châtillon bases or at least their principles?" "No," replied Napoleon, "it is sufficient to have hesitated an instant. No, no; the sword must decide everything. Cease to humiliate me. The dignity of France can still be saved. The chances are great, if you only gain me three or four days." Firm as M. de Caulaincourt was, he could with difficulty resist the torrent of this energy, whose impetuosity so many misfortunes had not abated. He asked that Prince Berthier should accompany him, as he knew the resources that the Emperor had still at his disposal, and was himself known and esteemed by the sovereigns, and would be listened to with attention. Napoleon did not allow M. de Caulaincourt to finish. In the first place he wanted Berthier, who alone knew how the army was distributed through the confused

theatre of war; but this was not his strongest reason. "Berthier is excellent," said Napoleon, "he has great qualities, he loves me, I love him, but he is weak. You have no idea of what those intriguers who are going to set to work are capable of doing. Go without him; you are the only one whose temperament would enable you to visit unhurt the focus of those intrigues."

After this animated conversation it was decided that Napoleon should fix himself at Fontainebleau, where he should concentrate the army and collect his remaining resources, and that whilst he was preparing everything for a last and formidable struggle, M. de Caulaincourt should endeavour, if not to stop, at least to retard the political enterprises which the Allies, together with the malcontents, were about to attempt in Paris—that three or four days would thus be gained, and by that time the longed-for moment would have arrived when Napoleon should appear at the gates of the capital; perhaps, indeed, to be defeated, but even so to involve the coalition in his ruin. M. de Caulaincourt accepted the mission with his usual fidelity, not indeed with the intention of deceiving the allied sovereigns, for he would not wish to deceive any one, not even the enemies of his country, but in the hope of renewing relations between an intractable master and victorious Europe. He left for Paris, whilst Napoleon set out for Fontainebleau, after having ordered the troops which arrived to take up a position on the river Essonne, and establish themselves firmly there. It was behind this line that Napoleon wished to concentrate his forces. He was so animated that one might have believed him on the eve of one of his greatest victories, rather than on the morrow of one of his greatest disasters. His ardent imagination had already conceived a design which could, he thought, change the destinies of all. He was bringing with him 50,000 men, who would be joined by 15,000 or 18,000 that were leaving Paris. With what he could collect from the banks of the Seine and the Yonne he would not have less than 70,000 combatants, whom he wished to concentrate between Fontainebleau and Paris, along the Essonne, his right on the Seine, his left in the direction of Orleans, where were his wife and son. The enemy would be dispersed in Paris, divided on the two banks of the Seine, and with 20,000 soldiers, whose hearts were inflamed with honor and patriotism, and Napoleon did not despair of striking terrible blows; blows that would resound through ages to come. Who could tell; perhaps in one bloody day he would restore the greatness of France. These ideas succeeded each other with the rapidity of lightning in his mind, and after sending M. de Caulaincourt to Paris he gave his orders to General Belliard, desiring him to go to the river Essonne, and to summon the two marshals thither and fix them on the banks of the Seine, on the Orleans route; he told him that on the next day he would furnish them with artillery to replace what they had lost in the glorious and fatal battle of Paris. Having made these arrangements he quitted M. de Caulaincourt and Belliard, and set out for Fontainebleau with Berthier to await and collect his army there.

Whilst Napoleon proceeded thither, M. de Caulaincourt took the road to Paris, and repaired to the Hôtel de Ville, seeking the municipal authorities—the sole power that still subsisted in our deserted capital. But they had already repaired to Bondy, to make an appeal to the allied sovereigns in favour of the Parisians. The greater part of the night had passed. The Emperor Alexander had received the two prefects, and the deputation that accompanied them, in his most gracious manner. This monarch, at length master of Paris, was at the height of his wishes. His pride once satisfied, all his good qualities came into play. His most decided inclination was the desire to please, and there were none whose approbation he more desired than that of those French who had conquered him so often, and whom he in his turn had conquered, and whose applause he passionately ambitioned. His most cherished dream was to astonish this generous people by the extent of his generosity, a noble weakness, if it were one.

He therefore received the two prefects and the Parisian deputation with the greatest courtesy, repeated to them what he had so often said before, that he did not war against France, but against the mad ambition of a single man; that he did not mean to impose either a government or a humiliating peace on France; but to deliver her from a despotism from which she had not suffered less than all Europe. He guaranteed the best treatment to the capital, provided the Parisians remained quiet, and he showed himself as friendly towards his guests as they desired to be towards him. He consented, without any difficulty, to confide the care of Paris to the National Guard, and not to billet his soldiers on the inhabitants. He only asked for provisions, which they had, and which they promised him.

As soon as the general conversation was finished, he addressed himself individually to each member of the deputation, and again affirmed, that whilst he brought the most honourable peace to France, he would also leave her full liberty in the choice of her government. He was particularly anxious to know what had become of M. de Talleyrand, what this great man was doing, and where he then was. M. de Nesselrode, who was present at this conversation, requested M. de Laborde, one of the deputation with whom he was acquainted, to repair immediately to M. de Talleyrand to detain him at Paris, if he had not left, and to assure him that the allied sovereigns held him in the highest esteem.

Whilst the prefects were with Alexander the officers of the two armies had arranged the conditions for the evacuation of Paris. It was agreed that at about seven in the morning the soldiers of Marshals Marmont and Mortier should deliver the barriers to the soldiers of the allied armies, after which the sovereigns would make their entrance into Paris.

Meantime M. de Caulaincourt, not having found the Parisian authorities at the Hôtel de Ville, had repaired to the Château de Bondy, met the deputation returning, and after great difficulty succeeded in gaining admittance to Alexander. Alexander received

him with the same cordiality as formerly, embraced him in the most affectionate manner, and explained why he had not received him at Prague; then coming to the great events of the day he said that, free from all resentment, and only desirous of peace, he came to seek it at Paris, since he had not been able to find it at Châtillon; that he wished it to be honorable for France, but also secure for Europe, and for that reason neither he nor his allies would any longer consent to negotiate with Napoleon; that it would not be difficult to find a person with whom they could treat, as they heard on all sides that France was as weary of Napoleon as Europe itself, and that she desired nothing better than to be rid of his despotism; that besides, the Allies had no idea of doing violence to this glorious France, but, on the contrary, meant to treat her with all respect, to leave her the choice of her own sovereign, and to conclude a peace with that sovereign as soon as France should have chosen him; that when they had entered Paris they would consult the most eminent persons to whom they would apply in every difference of opinion, and that what should be decided on by the most respectable persons of the country should be adopted by the Allies and consecrated by the adhesion of Europe.

Dismayed by language so firm, and at the same time so calm and mild, M. de Caulaincourt sought to combat the opinions expressed by Alexander. He tried to make him feel the danger the Allies would run if they, the representatives of social order and monarchy in Europe, in favouring revolutionary principles, should dethrone a prince so long recognised and flattered by all the powers, who had been accepted by them as an ally, and by one as a son-in-law; he dwelt on the danger of being influenced by the malcontents, who only consulted their own passions, and being thus deceived as to the true sentiments of France, who, while she condemned the continual wars of Napoleon, was still grateful for the glory and internal order she had enjoyed under his reign, and felt little inclination to exchange his powerful and glorious hand, for the weak and forgotten one of the Bourbons; in a word, the danger of driving Napoleon and the army to despair, and exposing to new and fearful risks an unhoped-for triumph, a triumph that might be confirmed that very instant, and rendered definite by an equitable and moderate peace.

These reasons appeared to have little weight with Alexander. He said that the Allies, having no party interests nor private views, they would not be guided by the malcontents, but by sensible men; that the allied sovereigns had not, and could not, have any desire to overturn thrones; that they were aware of the danger of reducing Napoleon to despair, but were resolved, after having come so far, and especially as they were now so united, to pursue the struggle to the utmost, that they might not be obliged to recommence it under less favourable circumstances; that, of course, they expected, that as long as Napoleon wielded a sword, he would make extraordinary exertions, but that, even should they be driven

back from Paris, they would return again and again, until they should have obtained an assured peace, a peace that could not be expected from a man who had ravaged Europe from Cadiz to Moscow.

Nevertheless, although Alexander affected not to fear any final act of desperation on the part of Napoleon, it was evident that he was interiorly disturbed by the apprehension, and that it would be an argument of great weight in the negotiations that were to follow. As to those resolutions which appeared so irrevocable on the part of the Allies, M. de Caulaincourt asked the Czar whether the Emperor of Austria had no regard for family ties, and if he had brought his soldiers so far that he might have the honor of dethroning his daughter; that if that were the case, he could no longer reproach the French people with putting an archduchess to death when he was come himself to dethrone another. "The Emperor of Austria," replied Alexander, "has felt much difficulty in coming to a determination, but since you refused the armistice of Lusigny, which he had devised to bring about an accommodation, he is as firmly convinced as we, that it would be impossible to treat with his son-in-law, and that a treaty of peace, to be durable, must be signed by some other than he.

To this declaration Alexander joined fresh assurances of friendship for M. de Caulaincourt, asked him to come to see him again in the course of the day, promising to receive him at any hour, but at the same time made him promise to observe a diplomatic silence in Paris; he then left him, for the hour of triumph approached, and his vanity rendered him impatient. His desire was not to burn Paris but to enter there in triumph.

On Thursday, March 31, 1814—day of sorrow not to be forgotten—the allied sovereigns set out between ten and eleven in the morning to make their triumphal entry into Paris. The Emperor Alexander had assumed, and was allowed by the other sovereigns to play the chief part. The King of Prussia yielded it to him most willingly, too happy in the success of the allied arms, a success of which his distrust of fate made him doubt until the last moment. The Emperor Francis and M. de Metternich, separated from the headquarters of the Allies by the battle of Arcis-sur-Aube, had retired to Dijon, and were still ignorant of the taking of Paris. Prince Schwarzenberg possessed sufficient authority and knowledge of their intentions to represent them during these important transactions. Lord Castlereagh, minister of a government where everything must be explained to the nation, was gone to lay before Parliament the motives of the treaty of Chaumont. There was therefore nobody to dispute with the Czar a position which he soon assumed openly as well as filled in reality.

Alexander, having round his arm a white scarf, which he had worn as a distinctive mark on the field of battle, crossed the Faubourg Saint Martin, on horseback, accompanied by the King of Prussia on his right, and Prince Schwarzenberg on his left, followed by a

brilliant staff, and escorted by 50,000 chosen soldiers, marching in perfect order. A proclamation of the two prefects, announcing the benevolent intentions of the allied monarchs, had warned the Parisians of the solemn and sad event which was about to cast a gloom over their city. It would be difficult to describe the feelings of the Parisians under the influence of contradictory emotions. The people of Paris, always so sensitive of the honour of the French arms, irritated at not receiving the muskets they had demanded, and suspecting treason where there was only weakness, bore with an ill-concealed aversion the presence of the foreign soldiers; the *bourgeoisie*, more enlightened though not less patriotic, appreciating the causes and consequences of events, were divided between horror of the invasion, and satisfaction at seeing an end to despotism and war. The ancient French nobility, forgetting the glory of their country, which was once so dear to them, in their hatred of the revolution, were so intoxicated with joy at the fall of Napoleon, that it prevented them from feeling, in its full extent, the disaster that had befallen their native land. Some of them, anxious to effect in Paris a change like that produced in Bordeaux, traversed the Faubourg Saint Germain, the Place de la Concorde, and the Boulevards, waving a white flag, and crying, "Vive le Roi," a cry that found no echo, but often provoked evident disapprobation. Calmly and sadly the National Guards performed their duty, ready to maintain order, which indeed nobody seemed inclined to disturb.

Such was the aspect of Paris. As the allied sovereigns pursued their route through a dense and silent crowd, across the Faubourg Saint Martin to the Boulevard, they encountered at first only mournful and sometimes threatening countenances. Beyond that, not an insult, not an acclamation signalized their slow and solemn march. As they arrived at the Boulevard, and approached the principal quarters of the capital, the countenances began to change with the sentiments of the people; some exclamations were heard, that seemed to indicate that the generous intentions of Alexander were appreciated; he replied with evident sensibility. His repeated salutations to the people, and the order observed by his soldiers, soon produced more friendly manifestations. At last, the group of royalists appeared, who since morning had been traversing Paris with a white banner, and enthusiastic cries of "Long live Louis the Eighteenth! long live Alexander! long live William!" burst on the ears of the sovereigns, and caused them evident satisfaction. To the violent cries of this group, were soon joined those of some elegantly dressed women, who waved their white handkerchiefs, and saluted the foreign monarchs with the passionate vivacity of their sex; sad spectacle, that we must deplore, but cannot wonder at, for it is the same that in every age and every country a divided people presents. Party triumphs stifle every feeling of patriotic sorrow that the woes of country ought to awaken.

These last manifestations reassured the allied monarchs, whom

the cold ill will testified by the populace in the Faubourg Saint Martin and the Boulevard Saint Denis had alarmed at first, not indeed for their personal safety, but for the success of their designs. They proceeded without pause to the Champs Elysées to review their soldiers. This great military spectacle filled up the hours of the day, which were passed by their ministers in attending to more serious and pressing cares. It was of urgent necessity to address this city of Paris, so much dreaded even when conquered; to tell the people that the Allies were come neither to conquer, nor to oppress, nor to humble France, that they brought peace, which an intractable chief would not accept; and as to the form of their government, they were free to choose whatever they pleased. But in order to arrange this harangue, and to know to whom it should be addressed, it was necessary to concert with some persons of repute, therefore, during the review in the Champs Elysées, M. de Nesselrode had gone to one whom public opinion seemed unanimously to point out—in a word, to M. de Talleyrand. He found him in his celebrated hotel in the Rue Saint Florentin, awaiting the steps which might be so easily foreseen, and asked him, in the name of the allied monarchs, what government they ought to give to France, assuring him, at the same time, that they had more confidence in his judgment than in that of any other man in the Empire. M. de Talleyrand, who had long known and appreciated this skilful diplomatist now deputed to wait on him, received him most warmly, and said that it was indeed true that the Imperial government had lost all favour in the minds of the people, that the *régime* of perpetual warfare inspired as much horror in 1814, as the guillotine had in 1800; and that nothing would be easier than to bring about a revolution, provided the Allies treated France with the regard due to so great a country, and proved to her, by deeds as well as by words, that they desired rather to be liberators than conquerors—on such generous terms, it was easy to come to an understanding. M. de Nesselrode repeated the assurances which he had been commissioned to lavish, and the two diplomatists were commencing to discuss the grave subjects connected with the affair, when a singular message was brought to M. de Nesselrode from the Emperor Alexander.

Through a refinement of modesty, Alexander did not wish to take up his residence in the Tuilleries, but in the Elysée, and during the review a note was given him, saying that the Elysée was undermined. This note he sent to M. de Nesselrode, in order that he might enquire if there were any truth in the information. M. de Nesselrode communicated this message to M. de Talleyrand, who smiled at the childishness of the warning, but, at the same time, courteously offered to place his mansion at the Emperor Alexander's disposal, where he would have no danger to fear, and which had been long conducted in a princely style. M. de Nesselrode eagerly seized the offer, as an opportunity of testifying a high esteem for a person of whom the Allies had great need, whilst it would, at the

same time, augment M. de Talleyrand's influence, and facilitate, in many ways, the work in hand.

The Duke de Dalberg, the Abbé de Pradt, Baron Louis, and a number of other persons who had been for a long time either the confidants or the visitors of M. de Talleyrand, were assembled at his house to talk over the wonderful events which were about to be accomplished. There his court was prepared to receive the Emperor Alexander, when, having reviewed his troops, he should betake himself to the hotel in the Rue Saint Florentin. The Emperor Alexander, alighting from his horse on the Place de la Concorde, repaired on foot to the house of the great imperial dignitary, to whom he presented his hand with that courtesy which seduced those who did not know how much *finesse* was concealed beneath the charm of his manner. He then traversed the apartments which were already filled with an eager crowd, where the new royalists, whose numbers visibly increased, were presented to him, and having lavished the most flattering attention on everybody, he retired with M. de Talleyrand to consult concerning the resolutions which were to be adopted. The King of Prussia and Prince Schwarzenberg were immediately summoned to his conference, to which M. de Talleyrand asked permission to introduce his true and only accomplice, the Duke de Dalberg, who, more enterprising than he, had ventured to send an emissary to the allied camp. No sooner were these eminent persons met than they commenced to discuss the business for which they had assembled—that of giving a government to France.

Alexander, who had already acquired the habit, strengthened by daily practice, of opening and closing the deliberations, commenced by repeating what he had said to everybody—that his allies were not come to France to effect a revolution, but to seek peace; that they would have concluded it at Châtillon if Napoleon had agreed, but that, having met with nothing but refusals at Châtillon, and being obliged to come and seek peace within the very walls of Paris, they were willing to conclude it with those who sincerely desired it; that it was not their part to name who should represent France under these circumstances, or to decide as to its form of government; that they did not mean to prescribe any person; that they would not even have taken it upon them to exclude Napoleon himself, if he had not prevented his admission by peremptorily refusing the conditions on which the safety of Europe depended; but Napoleon, being now excluded, they were prepared to admit any person whom the French nation would seem to desire, the Regent Maria Louisa, Prince Bernadotte, the Republic itself, or the Bourbons. They were ready to admit whomsoever the French people might desire; but, both for the interest of Europe and of France herself, the French ought to choose a government strong enough to make themselves respected, particularly when succeeding the powerful hand of Napoleon, as it would be well to avoid a repetition of the work they were now about to accomplish.

Alexander did not deny that though the allied monarchs felt a natural preference for the Bourbons, they feared that those princes being now strangers in France and unacquainted with the people, might be unequal to governing the country; neither did they hope to form a solid government with a woman and child, such as Maria Louisa and the King of Rome, and this was the decided opinion of the Emperor of Austria; that for his part, when considering what would be the best government to give to France, he had sometimes thought of Prince Bernadotte, but that, not being supported in this opinion, he would not insist on it, and that in this state of indecision it would be easy to bend the opinion of the sovereigns to the desires of France, who alone had a right to be consulted here; that the Allies had but one interest and made but one claim, which was to secure a certain peace, and by offering one that was honourable, such as was due to a nation covered with glory, a nation against whom the Allies felt no resentment for their own injuries, knowing well that she had been as much oppressed as the rest of Europe by the detested yoke that had just been broken.

It was M. de Talleyrand alone who was expected to reply to this speech, so mild, flattering, and insinuating. These questions were particularly addressed to him, as the most esteemed of those to whom they could be propounded. Generally speaking, M. de Talleyrand was not anxious to express his opinion, and willingly gave precedence to more eager speakers; but he was capable of deciding promptly when necessary. M. de Talleyrand possessed, in the highest degree, the faculty of discerning the exact state of affairs; he knew well what suited each person, and possessed the art of clothing his opinions in a piquant or sententious guise, which gave them all the value of a *bon mot*, or of an aphorism. He saw clearly that as Napoleon owed his throne to his military victories, that it was by such victories alone he could retain it; that to him defeat was equivalent to dethronement; he saw that a republic could not be proposed to a generation that had witnessed the horrors of 1793, and that as monarchy was the only suitable government, the Bourbon was the only acceptable dynasty, for it would not be possible to create at will, and by artificial means, the conditions that qualify a family for the throne. Genius, or chance, born of revolution, might, for a moment, raise a man to the highest position, and of this there was a living proof; but this phenomenon, once passed away, the people would quickly resume opinions consecrated by time and long-formed national habits.

Safe from imperial vengeance, M. de Talleyrand slowly and clearly pronounced the truth upon this subject, and declared that Napoleon was no longer suitable to France. France, to which, indeed, he had rendered great services, though unfortunately at a very high price, saw in him, as did all Europe, the personification of war, whilst she was desirous of peace. Napoleon was consequently the very antithesis of what the present generation desired. It could not be expected that he would sign a treaty of peace. In

fact any peace, even on the most honourable terms—such as France might accept and Europe, in her wisdom, grant—would be certain to fall short of Napoleon's pretensions; nor could he subscribe it without demeaning himself, and, consequently, with the intention of breaking it. They must now abandon all idea of Napoleon, since he was incompatible with peace, for which the whole world called, and it would be seen, in leaving free scope to public opinion, still repressed, that this was the universal belief. And if Napoleon himself was not fit, neither were his wife and son. Who could seriously believe that he would not be the moving spring of a government carried on in the names of Maria Louisa and the king of Rome, and really rule in their name? Nobody. It would still be Napoleon, with all his disadvantages, added to those of dissimulation. It was consequently necessary to renounce such a combination, and since the august prince, who had given his daughter to Napoleon, was willing to make a sacrifice for Europe, that sacrifice ought to be accepted in thanking the Emperor of Austria for having so well comprehended the difficulties of the position. As to the proposition of choosing Prince Bernadotte, who was become heir to the throne of Sweden, it required still less consideration. France, after being governed by a soldier of genius, would never brook the rule of a mediocre soldier, one, too, who was covered with the blood of her sons. There, then, only remained the Bourbons. Certainly France, that had once known them well, knew little of them now, and even entertained certain prepossessions against them. But she would renew her acquaintance, and receive them willingly, if they brought back, not the prejudices which had been already the ruin of their house, but the healthy ideas of the age. M. de Talleyrand added that it would be necessary to bind them by wise laws, and reconcile them with the army by placing about them the most distinguished military men; that with tact, precaution, and assiduity, all this might be accomplished; in fact it should be made possible, for it was necessary; that after so much national commotion, the most crying public want was the re-establishment of the social edifice on a steady basis, which only seemed possible when the throne of France should be restored to its old possessors. Summing up his opinion in a few words, M. de Talleyrand said, "The republic is an impossibility; the regency and Bernadotte are an intrigue; the Bourbons alone are a principle."

Such language was sure to please the allied sovereigns, and would have found still warmer applauses amongst them, if the Emperor Francis, the true representative of old Europe, if Lord Castlereagh, the head of the tory party, had been present. However, the rare good sense of King William made him desire that all that had just been said should be true. Alexander, without desiring it so much, was still willing to admit it, provided that the restoration of the Bourbons might be a means of pacifying France, without humbling her—of pleasing, after having conquered her. M. de Talleyrand, who had expressed his opinion clearly and firmly,

but without vehemence, wishing to give it the support of an eloquence more lively and warmer than his, proposed to the Allies and their ministers, assembled in his drawing-room, to introduce some Frenchmen who, by their position, intelligence, or official rank, deserved to be heard. He called in the Abbé de Pradt, Archbishop of Mechlin, who had lately been ambassador at Warsaw; Baron Louis, a skilful financier, and employed by Napoleon on several important occasions, and General Dessoles, formerly head of Moreau's staff and one of the most esteemed men in the army.

The interview then lost its character of a *tête-à-tête*. The conversation became animated, and sometimes confused from its very animation. The Abbé de Pradt with his petulant language, Baron Louis with his firmness, and General Dessoles with his solid reason affirmed, each in his own manner, that there was an end to Napoleon's rule, that nobody any longer desired a madman who was ready to sacrifice France and Europe to his sanguinary chimeras, that his wife and son would be only he, under another name, that Bernadotte would be considered an insult, and that as a monarchy was desired the Bourbons alone could be thought of; that it was true they were not thought of yet, but nobody had had time to think, but that if their names were once openly spoken everybody would see that they were the only suitable princes, and that by providing against their prejudices by good laws, they would have all the advantages, without the inconveniences that their name afforded.

Nobody was more influenced than Alexander by the conclusiveness of this advice. "Since this is your unanimous opinion," said he, "it is not for us to oppose it." Then looking at his allies, who signified their approbation by an inclination of the head, especially Prince Schwarzenberg, who had visibly approved what had been said against the regency of Maria Louisa, he declared himself ready to accept the Bourbons; "For," said he, "it is not the representatives of the old European monarchies that could object to the restoration of this ancient family." This principle once admitted, it was next to be considered how the deposition of Napoleon was to be assured, and what government should be instituted to reconcile Europe to France, and France to herself. M. de Talleyrand and those who composed his extempore council were of opinion that they ought to make use of the Senate, whom they expected to find ready to overthrow a ruler they had so long flattered, and hated while they flattered. But in order to inspire this body with sufficient courage to come to a decision, it was necessary that Napoleon should appear irrevocably condemned. Without this certainty the same timidity which had kept the senators silent before Napoleon would still keep them silent in presence of his shadow. To remove this difficulty the first and simplest way was to declare that the allied sovereigns—assembled at Paris and prepared to grant the most honorable peace to France—had determined not to treat with Napoleon, with whom they believed it impossible to conclude a sincere and durable peace. Although this was a very serious

engagement to enter into, they could and they did not hesitate, as it were the only means to induce a burst of public opinion with regard to Napoleon. The declaration was therefore adopted. However, for those who desired the immediate restoration of the Bourbons, it was not sufficient to say that the Allies would not treat with Napoleon. It would be necessary to add nor with any member of his family, for, if any chance were left for his son, timid persons would hold back, and it was those whom it was important to influence at this moment. This necessary addition was made on the proposition of Abbé de Pradt, and the following declaration, signed by Alexander in the name of his allies, was immediately placarded on the walls of Paris.

"The armies of the Allied Powers occupy the capital of France. The Allied Sovereigns are willing to promote the wishes of the French nation.

"They declare—

"That if the conditions of peace necessarily involved the strongest guarantees when it was a question of restraining the ambition of Bonaparte, they need be less stringent, when France herself by again adopting the rule of a moderate government, will give the best pledge of peace.

"Wherefore the Allies proclaim—

"That they will not treat with Napoleon, nor with any member of his family.

"That they respect the integrity of ancient France, such as it existed under her 'legitimate kings; that they even do more, because they still maintain the principle that for the welfare of Europe, France ought to be great and powerful.'

"The Allied Sovereigns will recognize and guarantee whatever constitution the French nation will choose. They therefore invite the Senate to appoint a Provisional Government to discharge the functions of the executive, and prepare a suitable constitution for the French people.

"The intentions that I here express are shared with me by all the Allied Powers.

"ALEXANDER.

"COUNT DE NESSELRODE, Secretary of State.

"Three o'clock, p.m. Paris, March 31, 1814."

It was decided that M. de Talleyrand and his co-operators, authorised by this declaration, should consult with the members of the Senate, and prevail on them to appoint a Provisional Government; they would afterwards consider the mode of formally and definitely pronouncing the deposition of Napoleon.

After this first act the sovereigns separated. Alexander remained at M. de Talleyrand's; the King of Prussia went to the hotel of Prince Eugene, which has since become the Prussian Embassy. Orders were given that the allied troops should not be billetted on the inhabitants, but that, furnished with provisions, they should

bivouac in the principal places of the capital, especially in the Champs-Elysées. General Sacken was appointed Governor of Paris. The editors of the different journals were either changed or required to speak according to the spirit of the new revolution. The telegraph, such as it then was, announced the great events which had been transacted in the capital, together with the reiterated assurances of the generous intentions of the Allies. Royalists, old and new, who during the day had besieged the Hôtel Talleyrand, dispersed through the capital, in order to propagate the hope, and almost the certainty, of the restoration of the Bourbons. Those who during the morning had borne a white banner through the streets of Paris, having assembled tumultuously, proposed to address the foreign sovereigns, and demand the immediate proclamation of the Bourbons. They considered the declaration, that the Allies would not treat with Napoleon, was indeed something gained, but yet not sufficient; they should also proclaim that they would treat with none but the Bourbons, the only legitimate sovereigns of France. After a warm and disorderly deliberation, they separated, having agreed, on this one point, that a deputation should be sent to Alexander, to announce to him the formal wishes of the Royalists. Effectively this deputation sought Alexander, first at the Elysée, then at the hotel in the Rue Saint-Florentin, but was not received by that prince, but by M. de Nesselrode, who, confining himself within the bounds of a suitable reserve, said that Europe, through her representatives at Paris, meant to be guided altogether by the wishes of France; and if these wishes were, as everything seemed to indicate, favourable to the Bourbons, the allied sovereigns would be happy to assist in their restoration, and to contribute to it by their full consent.

Thus was the first act of the revolution accomplished. The sovereigns had entered Paris, had been favourably received by the disarmed populace, whom they were anxious to flatter; they had consulted some persons of importance, and by their advice had declared they would no longer treat with Napoleon, but were ready to treat advantageously with any government agreeable to the French nation. This was sufficient to induce public opinion, weary of the rule of a soldier, who never desired repose for himself, and would never allow it to others, to declare in favour of the only dynasty which now presented itself to the public mind, except, indeed, that which had been raised up by victory, and which victory had just overthrown. A moment's hesitation was necessarily caused by an event so sudden, and after twenty years' absence of the Bourbons; but hours were now about to accomplish what in other times might not have been brought about in months and years.

The same evening and the following morning all those restless spirits who fling themselves into the torrent of revolutions—some to seek gain, others for the sake of the excitement—came and went without ceasing from M. de Talleyrand's to those persons

especially the senators, whose assistance was necessary. No great resistance was to be dreaded on any side, for every one considered Napoleon's defeat equivalent to his dethronement. It is true that the people of Paris felt some regret for the brilliant warrior who had long dazzled their imaginations, and who but a few days before had still appeared as the defender of their walls; but for all France, with the exception of the inhabitants of a few large towns, and of the peasantry whose huts had been ravaged, peace, the natural consequence of Napoleon's fall, was a great relief. Besides, there was a general desire for change amongst those who more directly guided events. The old revolutionists, without reflecting, that it was the Bourbons that would succeed Napoleon, rejoiced at the prospect of being revenged on the author of the 18 Brumaire. Sensible persons saw in present events only the predicted consequence of unlimited power, and of the mad rashness which they had so often deplored. Men, entirely occupied by their own interests, and anxious to court fortune, not seeing her beside Napoleon, turned their attention elsewhere. Amid feelings so unanimous, it was not to be feared that the Senate would blush for, or persevere in, its long submission. In general persons feel indignant against those by whom a long obedience has been imposed, and far from being a shackle to modesty, the sense of imposed subjection serves as a pretext for ingratitude.

Of this the faithful and unfortunate Duke de Vicence was fully convinced, during this day (31st March) and the following night, for after leaving Alexander he had called on the many persons, who under different titles had served the imperial government, and who could be of assistance in this extremity. He believed that by claiming their promised faith, or at least their gratitude—for every one of these men owed his fortune to Napoleon—he would succeed in strengthening the fidelity of those who began to waver, and that if the allied sovereigns, who were so desirous not to offend public opinion, should find it still, though ever so little, in favour of Napoleon, they would stop, and, instead of a revolution, content themselves with making peace, a work for which M. De Caulaincourt was now prepared. He had secretly determined to violate his instructions, even should his acts be disowned at Fontainebleau, and sign the Châtillon bases at Paris. But his unceasing visits during four-and-twenty hours had brought him only surprise, indignation, and profound contempt for men whom he did not know sufficiently to expect what he now experienced. Upright, straightforward, and intellectual, M. de Caulaincourt did not possess that profound knowledge of men which forbids anger by excluding surprise. He passed two days in astonishment and anger. His first visit was to the hotel in the Rue Saint Florentin, but here he felt no surprise, for, knowing as he did M. de Talleyrand's just causes of complaint, he considered his conduct quite natural. He only hoped to be able to induce him to choose another course. "It is too late," said the great actor in the scene of the day, "all that can be now done for

Napoleon is to secure him a distant retreat. He is a madman, who has lost everything, and deservedly lost, and who should no longer be taken into consideration. Think of yourself, and look to your own interests. Your own honorable reputation and the friendship of the Emperor Alexander will assure you a position under any government. Consider your own interests, and forget a master who is weary of your sincerity." M. de Caulaincourt, who expected such language from M. de Talleyrand, passing over what concerned himself, and exercising the privilege of an old friend, endeavoured to awaken the favor with which M. de Talleyrand was believed to regard the regency of Maria Louisa, under which he might be the first personage in the state. "It is too late," repeated the Prince de Bénévento, "I wished to save Maria Louisa and her son by keeping them in Paris, but a letter from that man whose destiny is to destroy everybody, obliged them to leave for Blois, and caused the void that we are now seeking to fill up. Cease your regrets; all is at an end for Napoleon and his friends. Think of your children, and let us save France by the only means we can now employ." M. de Caulaincourt, seeing that M. de Talleyrand was irrevocably engaged to the cause of the Bourbons, lost all hope of influencing him. As M. de Caulaincourt left the cabinet of M. de Talleyrand, he passed a group composed of officials of the Empire, amongst whom the Abbé de Pradt, as was his wont, was speaking without the least reserve. M. de Caulaincourt, who recalled to mind the long flatteries of the Bishop of Mechlin, could not restrain his anger, and walking directly towards him, left him no resource but the staircase of the Hôtel Saint Florentin. The others surrounded M. de Caulaincourt and tried to calm him, assuring him that his honorable fidelity misled him, and that he ought now to open his eyes to the truth. "But why not open them before?" cried M. de Caulaincourt, addressing himself to these men, who had been once such warm partisans of the Empire, "Why not open them before? If you had supported me six months ago we should have stopped on the brink of the abyss the man that you now call a fool, a madman, and an intractable tyrant." To this they only replied by turning away their heads, and saying that all was at an end for Napoleon. Still in despair, M. de Caulaincourt hastened to visit several of the senators, but he found few doors that were not closed at his name, once so honored and so well received. Some were from home, others pretended to be; some, however, taken by surprise, received him. Amongst these a few appeared embarrassed, surprised, and sought to conceal with profound sighs their evident determination to do anything that should be asked of them. Others, more daring, declared in a loud voice that it was time to think of France, that had been too long forgotten, too long sacrificed to a man who had seriously compromised the country, and who would cause its destruction if it were not torn from his grasp. "Sacrificed by whom?" said M. de Caulaincourt with passion, "if not by those who now see for the first time that the hero, the god of yesterday, is only

a madman and a despot, who must be hurled from the throne for the safety of France." But these reflections of the honest Duke de Vicence, however just, could not alter anything, and he saw clearly that Napoleon's cause was lost, and that the utmost that could be done would be, perhaps, to save the son in abandoning the father, but there was scarcely time even for that, so fearfully rapid was the succession of events. Besides, although indignant at what he saw, he felt that what he heard was the truth, though it ill became the lips that pronounced it, and, as though he were the culprit against whom these just reproaches were directed from every side, he withdrew silent and dejected. Despairing of the Senate, he determined to appeal to Alexander and Prince Schwarzenberg, that he might save something from this great wreck.

The success denied to M. de Caulaincourt with the senators was easily obtained by M. de Talleyrand; some affecting indignation, others sighing, but all trying to find favour with the man who held the future in his hands, seemed prepared to yield a full consent to whatever might be proposed to them. More character was shown by those who, disciples of M. de Sieyès, had formed an inactive but severe opposition in the Senate. These were ready to undertake everything against Napoleon, and their dignity was uncompromised, for they had never flattered him, but they were not as ready as their colleagues to accept whatever conditions might be imposed. They asked whether they were to be led, like prisoners of war, to the feet of the Bourbons; and if, in recalling this family, there was to be no guarantee for the principles of the French revolution, and the restoration of that liberty which had been so long immolated to the author of the 18th Brumaire. They were assured that the Bishop of Autun, independent of his clearsightedness, had a particular interest in taking precautions against the Bourbons, and that as soon as Napoleon should be set aside by the votes of the Senate, he would immediately occupy himself in framing a constitution suited to the wants and lights of the age.

This being understood M. de Talleyrand, as Grand Dignitary and Vice President of the Senate, took the resolution of convoking this body for the 1st of April, the day following the entrance of the allied armies, in order to supply the want of a governing authority. Although many doors were knocked at and many senators visited, the number of those who had quitted the capital with Maria Louisa, or those whose offices kept them near Napoleon, and above all the number of the intimidated was so great, that of 440 scarcely 70 could be assembled. At three o'clock they took their seats and waited with resignation to hear what should be proposed to them. M. de Talleyrand told them, in an ill-written speech, the production of the Abbé de Pradt, that they were called on to aid a forsaken people (an expression expressly chosen, that the resolution about to be taken might be based on the departure of the regent), and to provide for that indispensable want of every society—a government; that they were consequently invited to form a Provisional Government

which might assume the rejected reins of authority. All listened in profound silence to this discourse, which was pronounced with M. de Talleyrand's usual *nonchalance,* and none made an objection; but the members of the liberal opposition demanded immediately that the Provisional Government should not alone take upon it the administration of the State, but that it should also frame a constitution, which would consecrate the principles of the French revolution; and one suborned to allure his colleagues, hastened to add that the Senate and the Legislative Body should occupy the place of the great political bodies in the future constitution. These propositions were reciprocally accorded, and it was decided that the government which they were about to appoint, after having assumed the power, should immediately proceed to frame a constitution.

This being decided, they were next to compose this so-called Provisional Government. It is unnecessary to mention that those who were to be chosen, and their number, had been already decided at M. de Talleyrand's. As three would not suffice for the many wants of the time, five were chosen, and those from amongst the most submissive friends of M. de Talleyrand, and who, at the same time, would be useful from their connections with the different parties. Therefore four other persons were joined with M. de Talleyrand, the appointed head of the new government. The first was the Duke de Dalberg, a man little known in France, but the oldest, the most active, and the most skilful operator in the deep intrigue which now saw the light; he was, besides, intimately connected with the foreign princes and ministers, who were the necessary support of the new revolution. This man being chosen for the foreign diplomacy, another was to be selected for the army. The choice fell upon the old Beurnonville, an officer in the early times of the revolution, a man of moderate abilities, good-natured and yielding, who, a short while since, was mourning over the misfortunes of Napoleon, with M. de Lavelette, and was now inveighing against his faults in the Hôtel Talleyrand. He was intimately connected with the greater number of the military malcontents. It was necessary to meet, as far as possible, the opinions of the different parties, without, however, going beyond the society of M. de Talleyrand, where all were essentially moderate. M. de Jancourt was selected; an honest man, an old constituant, mild, enlightened, liberal; one who had belonged to the minority of the nobility, and happily represented those who desired to unite the Bourbons and liberty. But that royalty, the ruling influence of the moment, might not be forgotten, the Abbé de Montesquiou was appointed. He had been one of the presidents of the *Assemblée Constituante,* and, under the Empire, had been the secret correspondent of Louis XVIII, a churchman, and a man of the world, who no longer officiated as a priest, frequented society, and who, while he retained more than one political prejudice, affected to have no religious prepossession; well informed, witty, independent, but haughty and irritable, chosen now as an accessory, but des-

tined to become soon the principal person, because, besides to the advantage of representing a power that was hourly gaining importance, he joined that of having the most decided opinions of any member of the new government.

As we have said, these men had been previously fixed on at M. de Talleyrand's. The Senate, divided into groups, told each other who had been selected, and confirmed the choice by their votes, without dreaming of rejecting a single name of those that had been presented to them. These resolutions being adopted, M. de Talleyrand, leaving the Senate to put them into official form, returned to his hotel, where he found the numerous courtiers of his new grandeur, who were convinced that he would bring back the Bourbons, and govern them on their return.

The men thus chosen could constitute a nominal government, reflecting the various opinions of the day, but not an effective government, capable of administering public affairs. For this a ministry should be appointed. No sooner had M. de Talleyrand returned from the Luxembourg than he assembled his colleagues, and turned his attention to the choice of ministers. Two were of vital importance—the Ministers of War and Finance, for money must be got, and the army detached from Napoleon. Baron Louis was chosen Minister of Finance, a choice for which France had eternal cause of thanksgiving, a man of earnest and vigorous mind, who understood better than anyone of his time, the power of credit, that power which could alone close the wounds of war, and replace the creative genius of Napoleon. In appointing General Dupont (the unfortunate victim of Bayhen), Minister of War, they yielded too much to the feelings of the time, and made an appointment which had all the character of a reaction. Of late attention had been directed to the brilliant victories of General Dupont; in 1805 and 1806, his misfortunes had been pitied, and whilst Napoleon was blamed in secret and flattered in public, it was said privately that General Dupont was the victim chosen to deceive public opinion, as to the faults of the Spanish war. They erred in thinking that this choice, which was an accusation against Napoleon, and reparation to the army, would please the latter, whilst, on the contrary, it only irritated the military. M. de Talleyrand, one of General Dupont's judges, summoned him from his prison at Dreux. M. de Beugnot, another who held office under the Empire, was appointed Minister of the Home Department; a man of great intelligence, who had distinguished himself lately by piquant epigrams against the Empire. The Legal Department was confided to M. Henrion de Pansey, a liberal and respectable magistrate; the Naval to a disgraced Councillor of State, the estimable and hard-working M. Malouet; Foreign Affairs to M. de Laforest, a learned diplomatist, unconnected with any party, and possessing the usual moderation of his profession. The Civil Department, under the form of general direction, was confided to an employé of this department, M. Anglis, a secret friend of the Bourbons; and

the Post Office to M. de Bourrienne, an enemy of Napoleon, and formerly his secretary, who had been removed from the Cabinet for reasons unconnected with politics.

To these appointments, some of which were excellent and others indifferent or unsatisfactory, one most fortunate addition was made. The National Guard, very well constituted, had behaved honorably and firmly, and deserved to be treated with consideration. It received a worthy commander, General Dessoles, formerly head of Moreau's staff, a man of decided character, of clear and cultivated intellect, who had formerly been a republican, but was now a partisan of constitutional monarchy, and united in his person a civil and military character as became the chief of a troop called "The Citizen Militia."

These persons, like the government which appointed them, received only provisional titles. They were called "Commissioners delegated for the administration of justice, war, of the interior, &c." They were ordered to repair immediately to their posts, and take possession of their different offices as quickly and as completely as possible. Here was now a government to refer to, with which the sovereigns could treat, and which they were about to employ to tear from Napoleon whatever civil or military power he still possessed in France.

Instituting this provisional government was declaring that Napoleon had ceased to exist, and this was an important step. They would not have ventured to take it without the support of 200,000 foreign bayonets in Paris. This, however, was not sufficient for the few but zealous royalists that were at work in the capital, and who, if they were deficient in numbers, had with them all the weight of present circumstances. They would have the Bourbons proclaimed at once; they beset M. de Talleyrand and M. de Montesquiou to induce them to take a decided step, and declare without delay that Louis XVIII. was the only legitimate sovereign of France, and that his reign commenced at the death of the unfortunate Louis XVII. Such expeditious work did not suit either the calculations of M. de Talleyrand, who did not desire the unconditional return of the Bourbons, nor his temperament, which never allowed him to hurry, nor his prudence, which saw the necessity for many intermediate steps. To these impatient spirits he opposed his customary weapons—*nonchalance* and disdain; he considered himself justified in saying, what was true for some time at least—that he alone was to regulate public affairs.

Defeated on this side, the ardent Royalists betook themselves to the Municipal Council of Paris and the staff of the National Guard. Both counted in their numbers, large landed proprietors, rich merchants, and distinguished members of the liberal professions. It was to be expected that they would find partisans of royalty amongst them. Such were found in the Municipal Council, and M. Bellart, an advocate of talent, whose intellect was more brilliant than profound, drew up an address to the Parisians, in which he

enumerated in virulent language what party spirit then designated the crimes of Napoleon, but what history, with greater justice, will call his errors, errors of which some were very culpable and almost all irreparable. At the end of this long enumeration M. de Bellart proposed the deposition of Napoleon, adding resolutely that France could only be saved by throwing herself into the arms of the legitimate dynasty, and that the members of the Municipal Council, regardless of all danger, considered it a duty to proclaim this truth to their fellow citizens. This address was unanimously adopted. This deliberation was held in the presence of the prefect, M. de Chabrol, who owed his sudden elevation to Napoleon, having been transferred at once from the prefecture of Montenotte to that of the Seine. He could have opposed this address, but he thought he fulfilled his duty by declaring that his convictions were conformable to the proposed address, but that his gratitude prevented him from signing it. This address, signed by all the members of the council that were present, was posted on the walls of Paris on the evening of the 1st April, at the very time that the Senate was framing the Provisional Government. The Royalists hastened the same hour to the Hôtel Saint Florentin to get permission from the Provisional Government to insert the address in the *Moniteur*. M. de Talleyrand was displeased at this impatience, which, in his opinion, would spoil everything. His colleagues, with the exception of M. de Montesquiou, were of the same opinion, and contented themselves with allowing it to be posted in the streets of the capital, but refused its insertion in the *Moniteur*.

The Royalists were not so successful with the staff of the National Guard. General Dessoles, the lately-appointed chief, had unhesitatingly taken the side of the Bourbons, wishing, however, and that they should be restrained by a wise constitution, and joined in the efforts made to deck the National Guard again with the white cockade. But they were stopped by the resistance met with, particularly from M. Allent, head of the staff, a man known and esteemed during thirty years, as the most enlightened member of the *Conseil d Etat*.

There existed a great deal of patriotism in the Guard, united with much intelligence, prudence, love of order, and, above all, great disapproval of the faults of Napoleon. The men of the Guard blushed to see the enemy in the bosom of the capital; some of them had fought at the barriers, and so would all, had they been provided with arms, and, if the Regent had not abandoned them, they would have rivalled the populace in defending Paris. Without blaming those, who sought to replace an impracticable and insupportable government, they saw with repugnance that this work was half accomplished by foreigners, and it needed much precaution in leading them, step by step, to the deposition of Napoleon and the recall of the Bourbons. After a few trials the Royalists perceived they should go to work slowly, and that there was danger of wounding honest, sincere, and still warm feelings.

This was a lesson to the impatient, and fresh strength to

sensible persons like M. de Talleyrand, who did not wish to move too fast. One of the most ardent, and at this moment one of the most useful members of the Royalist party had just arrived in Paris. We mean M de Vitrolles, sent, as has been seen, to the camp of the allied sovereigns, and admitted to an audience after the rupture of the congress at Châtillon, and then sent to Lorraine to give some good advice to the Count d'Artois, and prepare him for the part for which Providence seemed to destine him. He was not perhaps the best person to counsel prudence to the prince, but he was a man of intelligence, and long acquainted with MM. de Talleyrand and de Dalberg, and was convinced that it would be impossible to succeed except united with them, and equally impossible to govern without them. This was the truth as far as concerned persons, if not with reference to things; but the one would lead to the other. When M. de Vitrolles arrived at Nancy he had great difficulty in finding the prince, who was still obliged to conceal himself, and whom he filled with joy when he told him of the late resolutions of the Allies, and the reasons there were for hoping for an approaching change in the affairs of France. The account of the battle of the 30th March had changed this hope into certainty. The prince, whom joy had rendered more willing to hear and to grant anything, made no objection to what was proposed. It appeared to him quite natural to treat the army well, and to surround himself with men who had become illustrious and remained powerful. "Besides," he frequently repeated, "I was very intimate with the Bishop of Autun. We passed some of the happiest years of our youth together, and I am sure he preserves the same feelings of friendship for me that I do for him." In fact, when the Count d'Artois was young and fond of pleasure he had often met M. de Talleyrand thinking and acting the same things in his sacerdotal habit, as the Count d'Artois did in the dress of a man of fashion. It is true the Count d'Artois had repented, and that M. de Talleyrand had not, but still the memories of the past formed between them a bond that was rather agreeable than otherwise. M. de Vitrolles assured the prince that M. de Talleyrand reciprocated his sentiments, but at the same time advised him not to call him "Bishop of Autun," and endeavoured to impress upon his memory that, having renounced holy orders and married, he was become Prince of Bénévento, Grand Dignitary of the Empire, and President of the Senate. Profiting of the warning, the Count of Artois corrected himself, called M. de Talleyrand Prince Bénévento, but the next moment called him bishop again, again corrected himself, and made the same mistake repeatedly, and in these insignificant things gave a proof already of that luckless memory which had forgotten nothing, but could receive no new impression, and which was destined on two future occasions to cause his fall and that of his august race.*

* I do not admire caricatures in history, and I do not wish to make one here; but I relate this anecdote because I consider it characteristic, and because it is to be found in the interesting, witty, and undoubtedly sincere memoirs of M. de Vitrolles.

For the present the only point on which it was necessary to decide was, that they should employ those Imperialists who consented to hand over the Empire to the Bourbons; and on this point M. de Vitrolles and the Count d'Artois naturally agreed. But the prince wished to enter Paris immediately, and that his title of Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom should be recognized there, as emanating solely from his brother, Louis XVIII., who had not quitted Hartwell, a residence in the neighbourhood of London. In this M. de Vitrolles agreed with the prince, and he set out again for Paris, to negotiate this immediate return, and the unrestricted title of Lieutenant-General. He had been exposed on the road, as we have seen, to the strangest accidents; he had been taken prisoner with M. de Wessenberg, set free with him, and arrived at Paris, where he fell suddenly into the midst of the circle at the Hôtel Saint Florentin, at the moment when they were thinking very little about the Count d'Artois. M. de Talleyrand and his friends were endeavouring to free themselves successively from the bonds which still bound men and things to the empire. These bonds, although relaxed and almost broken, needed still to be definitely broken, and this required a little time. The Senate, having instituted a Provisional Government, was preparing to pronounce the deposition of Napoleon, but did not mean to accept the Bourbons without the guarantee of a constitution. M. de Talleyrand, who shared this opinion, had twenty-four hours before promised all the senators that it should be as they wished; and besides, the Emperor Alexander, who at that time sincerely admired liberal opinions, declared, with the sincerity that distinguished his first impressions, that Europe should receive liberty as well as peace, and that the good work should commence with France. There was consequently something else to be done during those three or four days than to receive the Count d'Artois with open arms. Napoleon was to be cast off by declaring his deposition, the form of the new government was to be determined, and a constitution drawn up which was to be made a condition of the new reign.

The astonishment of the Count d'Artois' messenger was extreme. M. de Vitrolles was naturally of an impetuous temper, anxious to take part in the most important affairs, even such as were beyond his position; he was, besides, vain of the dangers through which he had passed, and proud of his newly-acquired importance. Gifted with remarkable intelligence, he saw clearly that the Bourbons could not rule as formerly; but the presumption of imposing upon them conditions of any kind, written or implied, filled him with surprise and indignation (sentiments that were shared in by all the Royalists of the time), and he would willingly have given utterance to some very unseasonable observations, if his impetuosity had not been restrained by the vastness of what was passing before his eyes. However, he saw that, before the prince could be received on any conditions, it was necessary that Napoleon should be dethroned,

which was not yet done; and that it was also necessary to introduce this idea by degrees to that great body, the Senate, which, though not much esteemed by the public, still contained within it the remains of the French Revolution, and was armed with its great principles, and that all this was to be done in the presence of an army commanded by Napoleon in person. Contemplating these difficulties, M. de Vitrolles became gradually calmer, but he still continued to urge them, repeating constantly that the Count d'Artois was impatient to come, and anxious to testify his gratitude to MM. de Talleyrand and Dalberg, and that they could not decently keep him waiting long.

To this M. de Talleyrand opposed that benumbing influence with which he met all unwelcome importunities, as with mocking indifference he said slowly, first looking round with absent gaze, that it would be well to reflect that a good deal remained to be done before he could have the happiness of embracing the Count d'Artois, but the matter would be looked to as soon as possible. M. de Vitrolles heard from M. de Dalberg, words still better calculated to cool him, if his ardour had not been so great. No person was more decidedly opposed to Napoleon than M. de Dalberg, but, at the same time, none could be more determined against the unconditional return of the Bourbons. He was a sincere liberal, and was never restrained by any consideration from expressing his opinions. "We must move quickly!" he said to M. de Vitrolles. "We must move steadily. Nothing is fixed here. It is with the greatest difficulty that we can succeed in having Napoleon's deposition definitely pronounced. Napoleon still intimidates everybody. We can only make use of the Senate, which, conquered by events, will yield; but it will require, and justly require, conditions. Besides, the Emperor of Russia, who rules everything here, is of the same opinion as the Senate. It is not from inclination that this prince accepts the Bourbons, and he considers that it is only with great precaution that France should be again delivered into their hands. You must learn to wait, and not pluck the fruit before it is ripe."

Indeed, no time had been lost. On the 31st of March, the foreign sovereigns had arrived, and decided that they would not treat any longer with Napoleon or any member of his family; on the 1st of April, a Provisional Government had been formed, and the address of the municipal body, in favour of the Bourbons placarded through Paris. It was now only the morning of the 2nd of April, so that not a moment had been lost. But the hour was come to pass the decisive and essential act, the deposition of Napoleon. Appointing a Provisional Government was indeed declaring that Napoleon's government was no longer recognized, but it was necessary to declare it in a formal manner, and as the Senate had taken the first step, it could not refuse to take the second. However, if some senators wished to make themselves conspicuous by speaking and acting in the spirit of the day, the majority was

stunned, silent, inactive, and although ready to pronounce the deposition of Napoleon, asked by looks, if not by words, that the formula should be drawn up by others, and that they should only be asked to sign it. But there were some members in the Senate, who felt less embarrassment, and were more inclined to come forward—these were the members of the old opposition, who generally assembled at Passy, where, under the inspiration of M. de Sieyés, they expressed their disapprobation—alas! only too well deserved, of all the acts of the Emperor. After twelve years of oppression, their hearts were full and yearned to give vent to their sentiments. M. de Talleyrand, who had himself of late freely criticised the Emperor's government, without, however, holding any connection with the opposition at Passy, considered it better to allow a free course to the sentiments of these gentlemen, and let them propose and draw up the act that declared the deposition of Napoleon. This task was committed to M. Lambrechts, an honest, simple, and hard-working man, who only thought of making himself useful, without considering whether he was serving the designs of men more crafty than he. The evening of the 2nd of April was spent in preparing the act of deposition, whilst those who drew it up, were promised that attention would immediately be directed to the Constitution—the formal and recognised condition of the return of the new dynasty.

The day on which this act was to be accomplished, M. de Talleyrand presented the Senate to the Emperor Alexander. This monarch, whose sole aim was to please the Parisians, had already walked on foot amongst them, regarding them with flattering smiles, and attracting their salutations by his personal beauty and gracious affability, scattering on every side well-timed phrases, and telling everybody he met, how much he loved and admired the French, that he did not in the least blame them for the misfortunes of Russia, neither would he avenge himself on them, but on the contrary, do them all the good in his power; that he did not consider himself their conqueror, but their liberator, and that if he had overcome their resistance, he knew well, it was because they thought and felt as he, and abhorred the yoke which had just been broken. These ideas repeated in a thousand refined, delicate, and graceful forms, had produced their effect, and the national pride feeling soothed in presence of a conqueror so anxious to please the vanquished, yielded to his caresses, and returned them, and it is a fact, that Alexander was become the most popular man in Paris. He alone, looked upon, thought of, or sought by those Parisians, dispensers of glory in modern times, was intoxicated with his success, and disposed to repay it by serving France in every way compatible with Russian ambition.

The Senate was presented to him on the evening of the 2nd of April. He received the members with the most perfect courtesy, repeated to them, that he had not taken arms against France, but against a single man, that he had admired how the French had

fought even in a cause they disliked, that he was too happy to see the end of this horrible struggle, and that as a proof of the satisfaction he felt, and the hope he experienced, that this struggle would not recommence, he had ordered that all the French prisoners throughout his dominions should be set free. The senators, charmed by everything that seemed an excuse for their submission, thanked Alexander most warmly for this magnanimous act, and promised on their side, to do all that lay in their power to terminate the misfortunes of France and the world.

On this same day, the Senate definitely pronounced the deposition of Napoleon. This document, embodied in two essential articles, declared, that the hereditary sovereignty established in the persons of Napoleon and his descendants, was abolished, and that all Frenchmen were absolved the oath they had sworn to him. The proposition once made, its unanimous adoption was a necessary consequence. It passed without any opposition in a sad and solemn silence, like a decree already recorded elsewhere by a Power higher than the Senate, higher than this earth. No party was satisfied, but the old oppositionists, who did not conceal their sentiments. To them therefore, was committed the task of explaining the causes that originated this decisive act. M. de Lambrechts accepted this commission, and speaking as if he were the organ of the Senate, he proposed the following reasons:—"That Napoleon had violated every law, in virtue of which he had been called upon to reign; that he had oppressed public and private liberty; arbitrarily imprisoned the citizens; imposed silence on the press; levied men and taxes, regardless of legal forms; shed the blood of the French in foolish and unnecessary wars; covered Europe with corpses; strewed the roads with wounded Frenchmen; in short, had carried his audacity so far, as to disregard the right of the national representatives of the nation to vote the taxes by increasing contributions in the past January, without the consent of the legislative body, and not even respecting *la chose jugée*, when he annulled the year before, the decision of the jury at Antwerp. That consequently, Napoleon had forfeited the throne, and his descendants in his person.

M. de Lambrechts seemed to have forgotten that if personal freedom, and the liberty of the press had been sacrificed, it was the duty of the Senate to prevent it, since that body was charged with the examination of all extraordinary acts relating to persons or writings; that if continually renewed conscriptions favoured the carrying on of universal wars, the Senate alone was to blame, for from 1804 to 1814, the conscriptions had been voted without opposition; that if in the levying of men and taxes the usual forms had been violated, it was also the fault of the Senate, for the power of voting troops and money had been transferred from the Legislative body to the Senate, with the consent of the latter, and in violation of the Imperial Constitution; that, in short, if legal decisions had not been respected, the Senate was also to blame, since it had consented to annul the decision of the jury at Antwerp. Honest M. de Lam-

brechts, we say, seemed to have so thoroughly forgotten these facts, present to the memory of every one else, that the Senators felt almost as much at their ease, as if in presence of a public as forgetful as themselves. As to the rest, M. de Lambrecht's statement received the same silent consent as the act of deposition itself, and so anxious were the Royalists to proclaim the result, that in order to save time, they had already placarded copies of the act of deposition through Paris, leaving the old oppositionists the task of explaining the motives on which they acted.

From this moment the essential act was accomplished, and the Senate in passing the act of deposition, had freed the French from their oath to Napoleon and his family. However, it was not sufficient to break the legal bonds that bound France to the Imperial dynasty; Napoleon should be deprived of the power of recovering the sceptre, which had been wrested from his grasp; and although protected by two hundred thousand men, the authors of the revolution that was being accomplished, were visited from time to time, with a sense of terror, especially when they thought of him who was at Fontainebleau, of what he was doing, and what he could do. He had still the army that had fought under his command, reinforced by all he had collected *en route*, and by those who had fought beneath the walls of Paris; he had still the army which was excellent, though ill commanded by Augereau, the incomparable armies of the Marshals Soult and Suchet, which, it is true, were at a distance, but could easily be united to his troops, by going to meet them or bringing them to him; he still had the Italian army! what might he not undertake with such means, exasperated as he was, and his military talents in full activity, as the events of the last two months had only too well proved? And at this moment, could he not with the troops actually under his command, make a descent upon Paris, and though he should not conquer, he might, at least, signalize his end by some tragic catastrophe, some brilliant vengeance, that would worthily crown his formidable career. The very idea of such possibilities was appalling, and, indeed, very little confidence was felt by the crowds of Royalists, old or new, that swarmed the Hôtel Talleyrand: they hawked the gossip of the day, they commented, they affirmed or denied the reports from Fontainebleau and its neighbourhood.

The only means to avert the danger was to excite some such feeling in the army as had been produced in the Senate. It was not, certainly, the civil servants of the empire that alone were weary of the rule of Napoleon; the same feeling was shared in more or less by very many of the military. Those unfortunate men who, often with wounded limbs and without the slightest prospect of an end to their sufferings, had followed Napoleon from Milan to Rome, from Rome to the Pyramids, from the Pyramids to Vienna, from Vienna to Madrid, from Madrid to Berlin, from Berlin to Moscow, those few survivors of two million warriors were weary and exhausted, though certainly after another fashion than the Senate, that was

tired of the fatigue of others. As long as glory and munificent gifts had been the reward of the unceasing dangers that threatened their lives they had uncomplainingly followed their successful captain. But now that the structure of rewards, which, like the colossal edifice of the empire, had extended from Rome to Lubeck, had crumbled to the earth, and where glory was no longer the brilliant renown that follows victory, but the virtuous and bitter fame that attends heroically-supported defeats, it would not be impossible by skilful intrigues to convert murmurs into complaints, and complaints into military sedition. Besides, there were very good reasons that could be adduced to military men, whom their own sufferings had already half persuaded, to induce them to have an exacting master. They would not be asked to abandon Napoleon for foreigners or for the Bourbons, which might inspire some with honest scruples, or others with repugnance, but to leave him that they may rally round the provisional government which had risen from the misfortunes entailed by Napoleon on France; and after all, this government was neither foreigners nor Bourbons, though the former were its support and the latter its aim, but an assemblage of the most influential men of the imperial *régime*, who, in the midst of Paris—that was deserted by the wife and brother of Napoleon, left unprotected by an erroneous manœuvre on his part, and invaded by the enemy—had concerted how to save the country, how to reconcile it with Europe, and to put an end to this disastrous and henceforth useless struggle. As long as Napoleon represented and protected France it was their duty to stand by him faithfully, whatever his faults may be, but now, when after a fatal complication of mistakes and reverses, he was conquered and could no longer do anything for France, except, perhaps, ruin her by continuing a calamitous war, was it not right to withdraw from a man who, although he still personified the glory of our arms, no longer represented the welfare of the nation, and to rally round a government which, without being prejudiced in favor of any institution or any dynasty, appealed to all good citizens to aid them in serving their country in this terrible crisis, leaving them free to consider afterwards (as their title "Provisional" testified) under what laws and what royal family they would place free and ransomed France.

Such rational ideas were sure to be well received by all sensible men, and still more willingly by those who, like the principal military officers, were disgusted, weary and anxious for their own interests, and the greater part of whom were suffering under private as well as public wrongs, for Napoleon had notoriously to find fault with more than one of his lieutenants during the last campaign, and he did so with all the abruptness of an impetuous and tyrannical temper. However, it must be told to their honor that none had shrunk before the enemy, and that those most tired of Napoleon's rule and most discontented had often been the bravest. But all things have an end, even devotedness itself, especially when men no longer see any legitimate cause for it, and consider themselves

sacrificed to the passions of senseless masters. Now, Napoleon could not appear in any other light to men, who were persuaded that it had always been in his power to make peace, and that he had refused to do so. He now experienced what all who do not habitually speak truth must experience—that truth itself is not believed from them. Napoleon had been blameable in not concluding peace at Prague, imprudent in not accepting it at Frankfort; but it was to his honor to refuse it at Châtillon; and at Fontainebleau, it was heroism to desire to prolong the war that he might rescue Paris from the hands of the enemy. But he did not get credit for this, and the sorrow, the dignified sorrow, of M. de Caulaincourt was almost become a calumny of Napoleon. The regret that M. de Caulaincourt expressed because peace had been so often rejected, led persons to imagine that lately, especially at Châtillon, it might have been accepted with honor, and it had been insanely refused. Napoleon was henceforth considered a furious madman, from whom they should at once, and at any cost, rescue both France and themselves.

Sometimes a violent feeling, resulting from physical fatigue, showed itself in the inferior ranks of the army; but a sunny day, a good meal, an hour's repose, or the sight of Napoleon, was sufficient to dispel it. It was amongst the commanding officers that the most dangerous species of weariness—moral fatigue—was exhibited, and this feeling increased in proportion to the rank, that is to say, to the penetration of those who felt it; strong in the generals, it was extreme in the marshals.

Amongst these was one man—no other than Marshal Marmont, who, perhaps, would have been least suspected, but whom M. de Talleyrand, with his facility in detecting the weak side of humanity, had pointed out as the man who would soonest yield to the good or bad reasons which could be employed to detach his most intimate lieutenants from Napoleon. This officer, whom Napoleon had created marshal and duke, more through affection for an old fellow-student than admiration for his talents, did not think himself appreciated under the imperial *régime*, or put in his true position, for it is undeniable that, though Napoleon felt a personal friendship for Marmont, and admiration for his courage, he thought little of his intellectual capacity. This presumptuous and unformed mind, partly candid, partly cunning, believing himself completely master of subjects of which he had only a superficial knowledge, desiring to assume the principal part, whilst at the very utmost he was fit for the second: not possessing sufficient superiority to direct, nor sufficient modesty to obey, was disagreeable to Napoleon, who preferred the simple and solid understanding of several of his marshals, who, if their intelligence was not very extensive, were at least punctual and energetic in obedience. He had consequently placed many men, whom Marmont believed his inferiors, in a position far superior to his. Besides this, Marmont had committed a serious fault at Craonne, and, instead of being displeased with himself, was angry

with Napoleon, though he had reproached him much less than his fault deserved. The wounds inflicted on his vanity were quite evident to M. de Talleyrand in the conversation he had with Marmont on the evening of the 30th of March, and he consequently pointed out this marshal as the term to which all the seductions of the Royalists ought to tend. Discontented vanity is in every crisis the object round which intrigue can twine with the greatest possibility of success. Besides, at this moment, Marmont held a position which, as much as his natural disposition, would attract those who sought to seduce him. He had just distinguished himself in the defence of Paris; and though half the honour by right belonged to Mortier, he had no hesitation in attributing it all to himself. He was stationed with his division on the Essonne, and protected Fontainebleau; and if he could be induced to join the Provisional Government, it would decide the question which the genius and indomitable spirit of Napoleon still rendered doubtful. The emissary chosen on this occasion, and who was perfectly well suited to the office, was M. de Montessuy, who had formerly been aide-de-camp to Marmont, and who had abandoned a military for a financial career, in which he had achieved an honourable success. M. de Montessuy shared in the healthy sentiments of the higher classes of the citizens respecting the war and the Imperial dynasty. He possessed, besides, that influence over Marmont which aides-de-camp sometimes acquire over their generals, and which arises from a knowledge of their weaknesses, and a capability of turning them to profit. M. de Montessuy was sent to Essonne, furnished with letters for Marmont and the other chief officers from the principal members of the new Government. To this was added another project, which promised to be no less efficacious. Since that Napoleon had retired to Fontainebleau, and had appeared to concentrate his forces there, a portion of the allied army had been stationed on the left bank of the Seine. The allied reserves were assembled in Paris and the environs, together with Bulow's division, which had been employed at the blockade of Châlons, and a large portion of the troops of the coalition was stationed between Juvisy, Choisy-le-Roi, Longjumeau, and Montlhéry; Prince Schwarzenberg had fixed his head-quarters not far from the Essonne, that he might be ready to profit by the first symptoms of weakness in Marmont. Marmont was not the sole object of these intrigues; a military relative was sent to influence Marshal Oudinot, Beurnonville wrote to his friend Marshal Macdonald, and a number of emissaries, principally military men, were sent to Fontainebleau, and who were expected to be well received by the wavering and the unfaithful, as well as by all who were anxious to hear how things were going on at Paris.

The one theme of all these verbal or written communications was, that men belonged to their country and not to an individual, to whom they might still be faithful, if, after compromising France, he was able to save her, but all that Napoleon could do would be

to shed blood unnecessarily, of which too much had been already poured forth; that Europe was resolved not to treat with him, whilst she was ready to grant the most honourable conditions to any other government than his; it was therefore necessary without delay to join the Provisional Government, with which Europe was now disposed to treat; that in joining this government they would give it strength, authority, in a word, the capability of making itself respected both by the Allies and the Bourbons, against whom, whilst they recalled them, they wished to take all necessary legal precautions. To these sensible and honourable reasons were added others, less elevated, though by no means objectionable, such as that the Bourbons would receive with open arms all officers who would join them, and especially those that would declare themselves first.

Independent of these intrigues, the principal authors of the new revolution took care that M. de Caulaincourt should leave Paris, because, being admitted to the same familiarity by Alexander as when at Petersburg, he represented the conqueror of Austerlitz and Friedland, his presence was as offensive to them as the Congress of Châtillon had been. In fact, whilst there was any appearance of negotiations being carried on with the deposed Emperor, nothing seemed secure, and the Royalists gave the Czar to understand that it was neither wise nor generous to induce them to compromise themselves farther, if there were any probability of treating with Napoleon. Alexander saw this very clearly, and though from the natural goodness of his heart it would have pained him to tell the full truth to M. de Caulaincourt, he ultimately discouraged him, in order to force him to leave Paris, without being necessitated to give an order to that effect. M. de Caulaincourt repeatedly told Alexander that he was the dupe of intriguers, of partizans, who deceived him as to the true sentiments of France, and that, wishing to complete his triumph, he perhaps exposed himself to some catastrophe that would involve Paris and the allied army in one common ruin. Alexander said he believed neither intrigues nor partizans, but trusted to his own eyes; that nobody desired Napoleon, that France was no less weary of him than Europe herself, that his friends must submit to necessity, and give up all hope of seeing him reign; that the Allies knew well what he was capable of; but they were prepared, and in a short time their preparations would be still more complete; that the friends of Napoleon could only render him one service, which was to induce him to resign, as that was the only measure that could ameliorate his fate. In speaking thus of an ameliorated fate for Napoleon, Alexander, always anxious to conciliate M. de Caulaincourt, hinted to him that the question under consideration was a comfortable retreat for Napoleon, and a throne for his son, under the regency of Maria Louisa. M. de Caulaincourt, although little inclined to idealize, began to conceive hopes, and he now said within himself, that the throne hinted at would be, perhaps, that of France, accorded to the King of Rome,

under the guardianship of his mother. Before returning to Fontainebleau, he made a last effort with Prince Schwarzenberg, whom, as the representative of Napoleon's father-in-law, and the negotiator of Maria Louisa's marriage, ought to be kindly disposed to the Napoleon dynasty, if not to Napoleon himself. But M. de Caulaincourt found Prince Schwarzenberg still more discouraging than Alexander, and far less reserved in the expression of his sentiments. Wearied by the presence and the importunities of M. de Caulaincourt, he said it was better to tell him frankly that the Allies would have nothing more to do with Napoleon or his family; that the Emperor of Austria had struggled for him to the last moment, and had proposed the armistice of Lusigny, with the view of giving him an opportunity of coming to an accommodation, but that instead of corresponding to his paternal intentions, Napoleon had sent his father-in-law a letter, which was most insulting to that monarch, as it seemed to imply that he was capable of deceiving his Allies, and that that letter would have been dangerous for Europe had Austria been capable of yielding to his views; that from the date of that letter the deeply-insulted Emperor Francis had adopted the resolution of no longer treating with Napoleon, in consequence of which the hazardous enterprise of marching to Paris was resolved on, and which, having succeeded, notwithstanding all the attendant dangers, the Allies were determined to profit of their success; they would have nothing further to do with Napoleon on any terms, and, finding public opinion in France coincide with theirs, he did not see why they should stop short in a path that alone was safe, for no repose could be expected but in getting rid of a man who, during eighteen years had convulsed the world; that as for his wife and son, it was a mere chimera to think of confiding an empire to them, which neither the one nor the other was capable of governing; that in fact Austria would not assume such a responsibility; that it would be either the government of Napoleon continued under a fictitious name, or the weakest, the most impotent of governments, that would neither give rest to France nor security to Europe; it was therefore better to come to a determination, and M. de Caulaincourt, instead of vainly soliciting persons who received him with a deference, induced by politeness, but with a deafness imposed by duty, would do better, with politeness, to tell the truth to Napoleon, and by inducing him to accept his fate, terminate a painful and protracted agony, alike disagreeable to himself, to France, and to Europe.

Irritated by such unmeasured words, M. de Caulaincourt, who liked to speak the undisguised truth, asked Prince Schwarzenberg whether it was not surprising that he, the minister of Napoleon's father-in-law, should be the most decided against him of all the representatives of Europe; that he, once the humble solicitor of Maria Louisa's marriage, should be now the haughtiest despiser of that union, and of the moral obligations that resulted from it, and that he, the zealous and well-recompensed lieutenant of the Em-

peror of the French during the Russian campaign, should now view his military enterprises with so much severity, and, in short, that, with such recent opportunities of refreshing his memory, he should have forgotten what were the French army and its chief. "Perhaps you suppose," said M. de Caulaincourt, proudly, "that because I, the constant apostle of peace, am here as a suppliant of that same peace, which I desired as earnestly after the battles of Wagram and of Dresden as I do at present,—perhaps you fancy that my sentiments are those of the master I serve; you mistake; —his genius is as indomitable as ever. He is, moreover, exasperated. His soldiers share his sentiments, and if the Austrians were able, with an enemy in their capital, to fight the battle of Essling and Wagram, the French will not do less to wrest their country from the hands of foreigners, and, indeed, there is not much vanity in believing that the French are as good as the Austrians, and Napoleon as valiant a leader as the Archduke Charles."

The bluntness of this address checked Prince Schwarzenberg somewhat, and he replied that he had never forgotten what he personally owed to Napoleon, but that he owed still more to his own sovereign; that he had indeed desired and even solicited the marriage of Maria Louisa; that he was not ignorant of the obligations incurred by that contract, but he considered it a tie, not a chain; that, in consideration of this connection, Austria had done all in her power to open Napoleon's eyes, and to lead him to moderate measures, but without effect; that all things must come to an end, even family considerations—that as to desperate acts, such might naturally be expected, from a man of genius commanding the French army, but the Allies were prepared for that, and they, too, would fight with desperation; that if the French fought to tear their country from the hands of foreigners, the allied sovereigns would combat to wrest their independence from a pitiless tyrant; they had been slaves, but would be so no longer; that if they were forced to quit Paris, it would only be to return; and that the Allies would not display less devotedness in fighting for their independence, than the French in defending the integrity of their soil.

It is very evident that if Austria, either from motives of friendship or prudence, had wished to favour Napoleon in 1813, and was satisfied in offering him peace at Prague, to restrain his absolute dominion over Europe; that if at Frankfort, she, from the same motives, had offered him France, together with the Rhine and the Alps; and if, in fine, to avoid the risks of the march upon Paris, she had offered at Châtillon to leave him France as it was in 1790, it was evident that now, when all dangers had been surmounted, and all considerations satisfied, the Emperor of Austria would prefer to get rid of an insupportable son-in-law, and, above all, share the fruits of the common victory, of which indeed his share would be large beyond his hopes, for in depriving France of the Low Countries and the Rhenish provinces, and renouncing all claim to

them herself, Austria would receive in exchange the line of the Inn, the Tyrol, and Italy. The doubtful and, in many ways, very embarrassing pleasure of seeing an archduchess Regent of France, would not compensate for the risk of seeing this terrible son-in-law repossess himself of the sceptre, and Austria would therefore prefer indemnifying this archduchess at her own expense in Italy, than leave her at Paris, which would be virtually keeping the place for Napoleon. This very natural calculation did not prove that Francis II. was a bad father, but it proved that he preferred the interests of his people to that of his daughter, and no one can say that in doing so he neglected his first duty.

This explains the little support that Napoleon's cause met with from Prince Schwarzenberg, who followed only too plainly a policy which M. de Metternich, had he been at Paris, would have pursued with more precaution, but not with less constancy. Although M. de Caulaincourt, from what he had seen during the last three days, was convinced there was not the least chance of gaining a single friend for Napoleon, even among the most eminent servants of the Empire, or among the representatives of the Allies, he still wished for an interview with the Emperor Alexander, to know whether if Napoleon were sacrificed, there would be any chance for his dynasty. Alexander received him with his usual cordiality, but repeated almost the same words he had used before, telling him that he ought to go to Fontainebleau, and advise a last and great sacrifice. "Go," he said to him, "for I am constantly asked to give an order for your departure, for it is said that your presence intimidates many persons, and makes them fear that we shall take the part of Napoleon. In the end, I shall be obliged to order you to go, for neither my allies nor I wish to favour such suppositions. Believe me, I feel no resentment. Napoleon is now overtaken by misfortune, and I forget the injuries he has inflicted on Russia. Both France and Europe need repose, but with him on the throne they could never hope to obtain it. On this point we are irrevocably decided. Let him ask what he will for himself, there is no retreat that we are not willing to grant him; if he will accept the friendship I offer, and come to my dominions, he shall receive there, not alone a magnificent, but a cordial hospitality. We shall thus both give a great example to the world; I in offering, he in accepting this asylum—but there is no other base of negotiation than his abdication. Go, and return as quickly as possible, with powers to treat on the sole conditions that we can accept."

M. de Caulaincourt tried to discover whether Napoleon could secure the throne to his son by his own abdication. Alexander refused to give a decided answer, but said that nothing was irrevocably fixed with regard to the Bourbons, though everything looked favorable for them. He himself appeared to feel very coolly towards them, and again pressed M. de Caulaincourt to turn his attention as quickly as possible to the personal fate of Napoleon. M. de Caulaincourt, wishing to discover the views of the Allies, asked if

in case Napoleon were deprived of France would they give him Tuscany as an indemnity. "Tuscany," exclaimed Alexander, "although, indeed, it is very little in comparison with France, could you expect that the allied powers would have Napoleon on the continent, or that Austria would suffer him in Italy? It is impossible." "Perhaps Parma, or Lucca," replied M. de Caulaincourt. "No, no, nothing on the continent," said the Emperor, "an island; let me see—Corsica perhaps." "But Corsica belongs to France," replied M. de Caulaincourt, "and Napoleon would not consent to accept that which had been wrested from himself." "Well, the island of Elba," added Alexander; "but go and induce your master to submit to a necessary resignation, and we shall consider the matter. Everything afterwards that is honorable and possible shall be done. I do not forget what is due to so great and so unfortunate a man."

At these words M. de Caulaincourt took his leave, convinced that without a military miracle there was absolutely no hope for Napoleon, and scarcely any for his son, and he felt it his duty to announce this sad truth to his master. He left on the evening of the 2nd of April, when the deposition was about to be pronounced, and with the conviction that it would be in a few hours. It was midnight when he arrived at Fontainebleau.

Whilst M. de Caulaincourt was seeking to strengthen the wavering friends of the empire in Paris, and to arrest the extreme resolution of the Allies, Napoleon was not losing his time at Fontainebleau. Complaints were no more suited to the loftiness of his character than self-deception to the greatness of his mind. If he sometimes abandoned himself to illusions, it was as a self-excuse or self-encouragement in the execution of some rash design, without being at the same time the dupe of the illusions. In misfortune he did not hesitate to look truth in the face, and met her aspect undismayed. Although at a distance from Paris he almost divined what was passing there; he saw that the Allies would seek to draw as much advantage as possible from their triumph, that the Senate would abandon him, and that arms alone would be his resource in this double danger. When he returned to Fontainebleau he called for his maps and the lists of his troops; he saw at a glance, the brilliant but terrible chance that fortune still offered him, and determined that it should not escape.

The Allies having lost twelve thousand men either by death or wounds, and having summoned Bulow's corps to Paris, now counted about one hundred and eighty thousand combatants. Napoleon had not less than seventy thousand, counting the corps of Marshals Mortier and Marmont, together with some troops from the banks of the Yonne and Seine. The disproportion was enormous, but the ardour of the army—we mean of the inferior ranks—the genius of Napoleon, and many local circumstances, might compensate for this numerical inferiority, and everything indicated a mighty catastrophe either for the capital or the coalition. If we consider

what would have been gained, had he succeeded, France restored to greatness by a single blow,—we mean by this not an insane but desirable greatness—the boundary of the Rhine, and not of the Elbe—we do not hesitate to say that the possible gain justified the risk, though even all the splendour of Paris had been destroyed in one bloody day. The Rhine frontier would compensate for what might be destroyed in the capital, we should withdraw our admiration from men who accompanied Napoleon to Moscow, if they now refused to follow him to Paris.

However this may be, Napoleon conceived a plan of whose success he had not the least doubt, and which to posterity must appear at least probable. Since Napoleon had fixed his centre of operation at Fontainebleau, the allied forces had been divided into three bodies, one of eight thousand men on the left of the Seine, between the Essonne and Paris; another within the walls of Paris itself, and the third outside on the right of the Seine. This disposition of the foreign troops, Napoleon considered as fatal to themselves, provided he could profit of it. His plan was to cross the Essonne suddenly with his army, and driving back Prince Schwarzenberg's eighty thousand men on the suburbs of Paris, call upon the citizens to join him, and profiting of the probable confusion of the Allies, thus unexpectedly attacked, he could destroy them, either by entering Paris along with them, or immediately crossing, by the bridges of which he was master, to the right bank of the Seine, and cut off their line of retreat. Indeed, it is possible, that with seventy thousand men under his command, he would overthrow the eighty thousand immediately opposed to him, and that those driven back upon Paris, would enter the town in confusion, where the slightest assistance from the Parisians would change this disorder into flight, and Napoleon, either following close on their heels or passing to the right bank of the Seine, where he could cut off their line of retreat, would place the Allies in a position from which they would have great difficulty in freeing themselves, even were they—which they were not—headed by the greatest of captains. It is also very probable, that after such an event, and aided by the peasants of Burgundy, Champagne, and Lorraine, who would not fail to attack the conquered allies, since they did not hesitate to attack them when conquerors, that Napoleon would soon have forced back the coalition upon the Rhine. If he was mistaken, it would be better, in our opinion, to have erred with him that day, than to have erred with him at Wilna in 1812, or at Dresden in 1813. Besides, he did not consider the risk to Paris; he estimated his capital as the Russians did Moscow, and he considered that too high a price could not be paid, to exterminate an enemy that had penetrated to the very heart of France.

Imperturbable in the midst of the most exciting circumstances, and always passing directly from the conception of his plans to the execution, he immediately issued his orders. He placed Marshals

Marmont and Mortier along the river Essonne, Marmont at Essonne itself, and Mortier at Mennecy. He had strengthened Marmont's corps with the Souham division, comprising at least six thousand men. He replaced Marmont and Mortier's artillery, part of which had been left outside the walls of Paris; he also furnished them with sixty pieces of cannon fully supplied. He commanded them to surround Corbeil with earth works, that they might take possession of the bridge independently of that of Melun, of which he was master; he would thus be able to manœuvre according to circumstances on both sides of the river; they were to collect at Corbeil all the supplies of grain abundantly distributed along that side of the river, and to manufacture at the powder-mills at Essonne as much powder as possible. He had stationed his cavalry *en échelon* in the direction of Arpajon, in order to be in communication with Orleans, whither he had summoned his wife and son, together with his brothers and ministers. He had ordered the Young Guard to advance between Chailly and Ponthierry, to keep the position for Oudinot, Macdonald, and Gérard, who were soon to arrive with their corps. Lastly, he sent forward the troops that, under General Alix, had so well defended the Yonne, and thus made his arrangements to have the army concentrated behind the Essonne on the 4th, the earliest possible date, considering the distance from Saint-Dizier to Fontainebleau. He every day reviewed the troops that joined, and without explaining himself fully, gave them hopes of a brilliant revenge for the defeat they had suffered before the walls of the capital. At sight of Napoleon, the Guards uttered wild cries, horse and foot, brandishing their sabres or their guns, mingling with their usual cry of "Long live the Emperor" the more significant one of "To Paris, to Paris!" The other divisions of the army, consisting of younger men more sensible of fatigue, arrived sometimes weary and dispirited. But they could not resist the presence of Napoleon, nor the view of his countenance, at once thoughtful and inspired, and after a little repose, these caught the contagion of sentiments, whose focus was in the Imperial Guards. On the other hand, the principal officers were seized with astonishment, Napoleon's presence embarrassed them, and even irritated without animating them. They dared not deny, that a last and fatal battle was a duty due to their country, if it could thus be saved, but they exclaimed against the idea of that battle being fought in Paris, if it were there he intended to fight, which, indeed, they did not know, but which they reported to be the case, to render the project the more odious. Their aides-de-camp and flatterers asserted the same thing. But it was very different with the officers immediately attached to the troops, who only spoke of avenging the honour of their arms, and instilled the same feeling into their men. Thus, the moment that Napoleon appeared, violent transports burst forth on every side, and all manifested a common sentiment, not indeed of devotion to his person,

but of exasperation against the enemy, and those traitors, who, they said, had betrayed the capital.

There are days, sad days! when it is difficult to see clearly what is our duty, when even hearts the most sincere are perplexed; this was the case now, and an honest man might in all sincerity hold one opinion at Paris, and a different one at Fontainebleau. We can easily understand, how in Paris, one could, without feeling any esteem for the Senate, adhere to its decisions, and prefer peace and liberty under the old dynasty, to a perpetual war under a violent and arbitrary government, whilst at Fontainebleau, on the contrary, to brave soldiers not obliged to choose between two different systems of policy, but called on to expel foreigners from their native land, the mere hope of crushing the coalition, were it even amidst the ruins of Paris, might be the cause of boundless enthusiasm. Indeed, although truth is independent of local position, and that what is truth in one place, is not falsehood elsewhere, still it seems to us, that a good deal depends on the point from which we view it, and that duty assumes different aspects according to circumstances. In Paris, good citizens were called on to choose between the Charter and the Bourbons; in Fontainebleau, soldiers, in the mere hope of expelling an enemy from their land, were bound to expose their lives once more, and it would be more patriotic to die now before Essonne, than formerly at Austerlitz or Jena, for they would now unquestionably die for their country, and sacrifice themselves, not to exalt success, but to aid misfortune.

We repeat that the public mind must necessarily be deeply agitated amidst such great events, and this M. de Caulaincourt found to be the case, when, on the night of the 4th of April, he appeared at Napoleon's door, where the unoccupied staff that guarded it besieged him with questions, and implored him to tell the truth to the Emperor. This noble-minded man needed no persuasion on that point. He related, in a simple and straightforward manner, without reserve, all that he had seen and heard during his stay at Paris; he did not conceal from Napoleon the furious passions that were excited against him, nor the extreme resolutions of the sovereigns with regard to him; but though he had never hesitated to advise, he dared not do so now, so great would be the difficulty of forming an opinion, and so useless and cruel would it be even to insinuate the slightest counsel. Napoleon received M. de Caulaincourt very mildly, and with visible signs of gratitude, and appeared neither disturbed nor astonished at what he heard. He had already learned from different persons some of the facts related by M. de Caulaincourt, and he had divined the rest. He was aware of the appointment of the Provisional Government, and the passing of the Act of Deposition, but not of the adduced motives; he was also aware of the efforts made to overturn his statue. "It is well done," said he to M. de Caulaincourt, "and is only what I deserve. I did not desire statues, for I know that it is only those erected by posterity

that are safe; to conserve those erected during life, one must be always successful. Denon wished to flatter, I had the weakness to yield, and you see what I have gained. But let us talk of something more important. Nothing in your recital surprises me; Talleyrand wishes to revenge himself on me, and the Bourbons will avenge me on him. But those men of the revolution that fill the Senate, and amongst whom there is more than one regicide, are very imprudent to throw themselves into the arms of foreigners, who will hand them over to the Bourbons; but they are frightened, and seek their safety where they may. As to the allied sovereigns, they only wish to humble France; however, they do not act well towards me. I could have dethroned the Emperor Francis and King William, and could have excited the Russian peasants against Alexander, and I did not do it; I acted towards them like a king, and they behave to me like Jacobins—this is giving a bad example. Alexander is the least hostile amongst them; he has had his revenge, and, moreover, is good-hearted, though cunning. The Austrians are what I have ever found them, humble in adversity, and insolent and heartless in prosperity; the Emperor almost forced me to take his daughter, and now he acts as though that daughter were not his. Schwarzenberg is the advocate of emigration, and Metternich of the English; my father-in-law lets them have their way, we shall see whether he will allow them to follow out their views; the Empress hopes he will not. As for the English and Prussians, what they want is to annihilate France. All is not finished yet. The Allies wish to put me aside, because they feel that I alone can restore our fallen fortunes. Believe me, I do not value a throne; born a soldier, I can become a citizen again. You know my tastes; what is it I need? A little bread should I live; six feet of earth if I die. It is true that I have loved, and still love glory. . . . But my fame is beyond the reach of man. . . . If I seek to rule a few days longer, it is that I may restore the honour of our arms, and wrest France from her implacable enemies. You have done well in not signing any document, for I could not subscribe to the conditions that would have been imposed on you. The Bourbons may accept such conditions with honour, the France they are offered is only what they have made her themselves; I could not do so. We are soldiers, Caulaincourt, and what is death in such a cause as ours? Besides, do not fancy that our fate is definitely decided; if I had my army, I should have already made an attack, and all would be over in two hours, for the enemy is in a position of imminent danger. What glory, should we succeed in driving them forth! what glory for the Parisians to expel the Cossacks from their capital, and hand them over to the peasants of Burgundy and Lorraine, who would finish them! But it is only a short delay. After to-morrow I shall have the corps of Macdonald, Oudinot, and Gérard, and if they follow me, I shall soon change the aspect of affairs. The chief men of the army are weary of this work, but the mass will march; my *old moustaches of the Guard* will give the

example, and not a single man will refuse to follow them. In a few days, my dear Caulaincourt, all may be changed, and then what satisfaction—what glory!"

After pronouncing these words, with calmness mingled with a warmth of feeling that sought vent in words, Napoleon dismissed M. de Caulaincourt to repose, and soon fell into a profound sleep himself.

He passed the following day—the 3rd April—in reviewing his troops and making preparations, and his countenance, sometimes shaded by thought, sometimes lighted with animation, and the flame of genius sparkling in his eyes, he seemed filled with some mighty project that he was anxious to put into execution. In this all-important moment the soldiers could not resist the effect of his presence, and though weary and exhausted, they cried in almost frenzied accents, "Long live the Emperor!" In the rage excited by the tales of the Old Guards, who related, with the credulity common to camps, that Paris had been lost by treason, they felt no other desire than to tear their capital from the hands of traitors. As we mentioned before, these sentiments, common to the soldiers and officers immediately in command, were not shared by the staff. The emissaries, who had come from Paris, mingling among these latter, asserted that Napoleon had been legally deposed, and that those who continued to obey him only obeyed a rebel, and became, by the fact, rebels themselves; that it was now time to abandon a man who had ruined France, and who would ruin them also if they did not abandon him, and rally round the paternal government of the Bourbons, that awaited them with open arms; that, indeed, with this government alone was peace to be hoped for, as Europe was resolved to destroy Napoleon and his adherents. They also said that by quitting, what was henceforth a rebellious camp, they would preserve their rank, pensions, and dignity, and still enjoy, beneath the shade of a protecting throne, the glory they had acquired, and which none could deny them; whilst, pursuing an opposite course, they would be surrounded by 400,000 enemies, and cut off to a single man. It was not difficult to make reasons valid in the weary and anxious minds of the commanding officers, and excite them to an extraordinary outburst, not alone against the political errors of Napoleon, which were only too real and disastrous, but also against his pretended military errors. According to them he was only an adventurer who had had a run of good luck, which he abused until he exhausted it. 1813 had been but a succession of blunders: it was the same in 1814, and quite lately he committed a fresh mistake in seeking an enemy at Dizier, who ought to have been sought at Paris. And now, made more desperate by misfortunes, he wanted to fight a last battle, and sacrifice the poor remains of his army. Let there be a last battle, they said, if it will restore the honour of our arms and save France. But Napoleon, in his rage against the Parisians, has resolved to fight this battle in the very heart of Paris, with the intention, ap-

parently, of killing as many Parisians as Austrians, Prussians, or Russians. Napoleon's enemies industriously spread the report that this battle was to be fought in Paris itself, in order to attach the greater odium to this last great effort, and in admitting that the risk ought to be incurred if there were any chance of thereby saving France, they demanded, with a terror sometimes feigned, sometimes sincere, whether it was not the act of a madman or a barbarian, to seek to convert Paris into a battle field, and thus give the allied sovereigns a legitimate reason for turning the capital of France into a new Moscow.

Such discourses excited the members of the different staffs to the highest degree, and whilst a truly patriotic fury animated the Guard, and from them passed to the inferior ranks of the army, a very different feeling took possession of the different staffs and commanding officers. This double current of contradictory opinions, only increased during the course of the 3rd day of April, influenced also by information coming from Paris or the outposts.

On the following morning—the 4th April—Napoleon seemed, at last, to have decided to act. He explained his plans to M. de Caulaincourt. The troops under Macdonald, Oudinot, and Gérard, were expected to arrive that day, and by granting them a day's rest, he expected to be able the next day, the 5th, or at furthest on the 6th, to let them fall into line, and attack the enemy with 70,000 men. He had no doubt of his success. Early in the morning he gave orders that the Guards should leave, and station themselves behind Marmont and Mortier on the Essonne, in order to support the movement, and at the same time to leave room for the troops that were to arrive. Having reviewed the corps that were to leave, he assembled the officers and sub-officers in a circle round him, and in sonorous voice addressed them in the following energetic words:—

"Soldiers, the enemy, in stealing three marches on us, have rendered themselves masters of Paris. They must be expelled. Frenchmen, unworthy of the name—emigrants, whom we had the weakness to pardon formerly—have made common cause with the foreigners, and mounted the white cockade. Cowards! they shall receive the reward of this additional crime. . . . Let us swear to conquer or die, to avenge the insult offered to our country and our arms."

"We swear it!" cried those old officers, all on fire with devotion to their standard, and then dispersed to communicate the ardour that consumed them to their men. The troops defiled, uttering wild acclamations.

When this scene was ended, Napoleon mounted the staircase of the palace, followed by a crowd of officers, some still under the influence of the enthusiasm which had just been aroused, but others with very different sentiments. They immediately formed groups around the Marshals, and unanimously asserted that the resolution was evidently taken to risk their existence and the fate of France in

a last scene of madness, and they must prevent such folly by protesting against it. This was the unanimous opinion, but each wished to avoid being the first to speak. The aides-de-camp surrounded the generals, the generals surrounded the marshals, and exciting each other mutually, they demanded that their chiefs should refuse to obey. Marshal Macdonald was only just arrived, for he had not quitted his division. As he was alighting from his horse, still covered with mud, he was presented with a letter from Beurnonville, bearing the following erroneous address, "For Marshal Macdonald, Duke of Ragusa." This letter was sent to Marmont, as Duke of Ragusa, and he having read it, perceived from the contents that it was meant for Marshal Macdonald, and forwarded it to him. This letter conjured Macdonald, in the name of friendship, in the name of his family, to whom he was tenderly attached, and who ran the risk of perishing amidst the flames of the capital, to abandon a tyrant, who was no longer anything but a rebel, and join the legitimate government of the Bourbons, who were about to re-enter France, bearing peace in one hand and liberty in the other. Macdonald had preserved in his heart the sentiments of the army of the Rhine; he was irritated by what he had seen and suffered during the two last campaigns, and he was passionately attached to his children. He had just heard from them—they were still in Paris: he was overpowered with sorrow. The officers surrounded him; they said he ought to join his colleagues, and contribute to put an end to this hateful and frantic reign. He consented, and only asked time to change his dress for one more suitable. They had by this time arrived at the door of Napoleon's cabinet, and they resolved not to leave the antechamber, but watch over the marshals and defend them, if, after the scene that was about to take place, Napoleon should put them under arrest. There were some officers in this kind of mutiny who were even mad enough to cry that they ought to get rid of Napoleon.* In a word, it was a repetition of one of those military revolts of which the Roman Empire had given such odious examples, and it must be admitted that a reign so deplorably warlike met with a worthy end in the midst of a military sedition.

The marshals entered. They were Lefebvre, Oudinot, and Ney. Macdonald was to join them. They found Napoleon surrounded by Major and General Berthier, the Dukes of Bassano and Vicence, and several other eminent persons. Napoleon had taken off his hat and sword, and was walking about his cabinet, speaking with more than ordinary vehemence. The marshals were dejected, embarrassed, and afraid to speak. Napoleon, divining the cause of their silence, and wishing to make them break it, asked them if they had any news from Paris, to which they replied that they had, and very disagreeable news. He asked what was their opinion.

* I have received these sad details from eye-witnesses, respectable men, whom I could name, and who may be ranked amongst the most honourable men of their time.

"All that has happened," said they, "has been very sad, very deplorable; but what was saddest of all was, that there was no probable end to this cruel state of affairs." "The end," replied Napoleon, "depends on us. You see those brave soldiers, who have neither rank nor pensions to save, and who only think of marching forward, of dying, that they may tear France from the hands of strangers. We must follow them. The Allies are divided on both banks of the Seine, of which we have the principal bridges, and dispersed in an immense city. Vigorously attacked in this position they are lost. The Parisians are burning for revenge; they will not allow the foreigner to depart without pursuing them, and then the peasants will complete their destruction. Without doubt they may return; but Eugene has returned from Italy with 36,000 men, Augereau has 30,000, Suchet 20,000, Soult 40,000. I can summon to our aid the greater part of these forces. I have 70,000 men here, and with this mass I shall throw into the Rhine all that shall have left Paris and wish to return there. We shall save France—we shall avenge our honour—and then I will accept a moderate peace. What does it need to accomplish all this? One last effort, that will allow you to enjoy in repose the benefits of twenty-five years of labour."

These reasons, though very striking, did not seem to please the listeners. They objected to Napoleon, that though it might be legitimate to risk a last battle, provided it might be of use, and not the cause of irremediable catastrophe, still it would be frightful to fight it in the centre of Paris, and to turn the capital into another Moscow. To this, Napoleon replied, that it was a calumny to say he wished to avenge himself on the Parisians, that he did not mean to turn Paris into a battle field, but he would attack the enemy wheresoever Providence gave him an opportunity, and that in the actual position of the Allies, they would necessarily be destroyed. Then addressing himself to Lefebvre, Oudinot, and Ney, he asked them, if they desired to live under the Bourbons? To this they replied by loud exclamations. Lefebvre, with the violence of an old Jacobin, declared he would not, and in this he was sincere. Ney expressed himself with incredible vehemence; he said that his children could never enjoy comfort or safety under the Bourbons, and that the only desirable sovereign for them, was the King of Rome. "And do you believe," replied Napoleon, "that in abdicating, I shall secure to you and your children, the advantage of living under my son?" Do you not see, that the proposal of a regency during the minority of the King of Rome is only a cunning falsehood, invented for the purpose of separating you from me, and by that means destroying us both. The government of my wife and son would not stand one hour, and then you would have an anarchy, that, in perhaps a fortnight, would end with the Bourbons. Besides," he said, "there are family secrets that I cannot divulge ..... A government directed by my wife is impossible." Napoleon alluded to the reasons that had induced him to order his wife to leave Paris, the chief of which was, the weakness of Maria

Louisa's character, with which he was well acquainted. When Napoleon spoke to the marshals of living under the Bourbons, they burst forth into violent exclamations of abhorrence, but when he mentioned his abdication and its possible consequences, they did not speak, but their silence showed that it was what they desired. Napoleon understood them, but did not let it appear. At this moment, Macdonald, disturbed and anxious, entered, holding Beurnonville's letter in his hand. "What news do you bring?" said Napoleon. "Very bad," replied the Marshal. "I am told that there are two hundred thousand of the enemy in Paris, and that we are going to fight them there. It is a frightful idea..... Is it not time to put an end to all this?" "The question is not," said Napoleon, "whether we shall fight in Paris, but whether we shall not profit of the mistakes of our enemies." Then a discussion commenced, and the Emperor asked Macdonald what was the letter about that he held. Macdonald replied, "Sire, I keep nothing secret from you, you can read it." "Nor I from you," said Napoleon, "let it be read aloud." M. de Bassano took the letter and read it with that embarrassment and pain, which a subject, who is still respectful and attached to his master, must feel under such circumstances. Napoleon listened with a disdainful calmness, and when it was ended, without blaming the frankness of Macdonald, he said, that Beurnonville and such men were only intriguers, who, with the assistance of foreigners, were trying to bring about a counter-revolution, that they would end by ruining France, and weakening her for ever; that the Bourbons far from pacifying France, would only throw her into confusion, whilst with a little perseverance, the present state of affairs could be changed in two hours. "Yes," replied Macdonald, whose heart was grieved by the thought of a battle in Paris, "yes, that might be, but at the expense of reducing our capital to ashes, and fighting probably over the corpses of our children." The Marshal also declared, without venturing to say that he would not obey, that the soldiers were not to be depended on. Ney seemed to confirm this assertion. Having thus reached the limit that separates respect from revolt, the marshals sought to cast the blame of disobedience upon the soldiers, whilst they themselves were alone in fault. Napoleon saw this, and said proudly: "If your soldiers will not obey you, they will obey me, I need but speak a word to lead them where I will." Then, in a tone of haughtiness that forbad reply, he added, "Retire gentlemen, I shall consider, and let you know my determination."

They left the room quite astonished at their own daring, little as it had been, and in admiration of their courage, made themselves appear more guilty than they really were, by declaring to their aides-de-camp, that they had cast aside all fear and boldly told the truth.*

* It has been spoken, written, and repeated in every variety of form, that the scene that took place in Napoleon's cabinet, on the morning of the 4th of April, had been one of violence carried so far as threats— so far, in fact, as to force him to abdicate. I have

They retired, awaiting the result of this very extraordinary scene, for when Napoleon was in full possession of his power, they had never ventured to address an observation to him, when perhaps, a single word would have arrested his descent into the abyss.

On that day, Napoleon had but to step outside his cabinet, and appeal from the marshals to the colonels and soldiers, and he would have found enthusiastic servants ready to follow him where he would, and ready also to avenge him on ungrateful men, overloaded with his benefits. But to expect that he would at that moment turn from the door of his palace an entire staff, composed of generals and marshals, who during twenty years had lavished their blood for him, and form another of colonels and brigadiers, and so commence a formidable military operation, would be asking too much even from the most determined and energetic character.

When Napoleon found himself alone with Berthier, Caulaincourt, and Bassano, he gave free course to his suppressed indignation.

"Did you see them?" he said, "did you see how excited they were when I mentioned the restoration of the Bourbons, and how silent when I spoke of my abdication? That is what they want, for they have been persuaded that, by setting me aside, they could enjoy the riches I have lavished on them, under the government of my son. Shortsighted creatures, they do not perceive that there is no choice but between me and the Bourbons; they cannot see that my wife and son are only a shadow, that would fade away in a few days or months."

He then complained of their daring to read such a letter to him as Beurnonville's, and expatiated on the weakness and ingratitude of men. M. de Caulaincourt tried to calm him, saying that Marshal Macdonald was a noble-minded man, and had only shown the letter in compliance with the Emperor's wish; that this repugnance to fighting in Paris, which was only a pretext with some, was with others a deep and honest feeling; he then added that the project of abdicating in favour of his son was very generally received, and that it was, in fact, the only base on which they could still negotiate.

Napoleon soon recovered that equanimity with which great minds rise superior to circumstances, and acknowledged that the popular idea of the hour was his abdicating in favour of the King of Rome, which perhaps afforded some satisfaction to anxious

before me at this moment, the manuscript memoirs of two most respectable witnesses of this scene, I have collected information from several credible occular witnesses, and I am convinced, that the reports spread on this subject are all misrepresentations. In fact, the aim and result of this interview were to wrest a conditional abdication from Napoleon, but as to the mode of execution, it did not exceed what I relate. The exaggerated versions, whose veracity I dispute, drew their origin, their sad origin, in the boasting of some military men, who wishing to make themselves of importance, a few days later, represented themselves as more culpable than they really were, and which they regretted the following year. It was their boastings, still further exaggerated by the propagators of false reports, that gave rise to such misrepresentations, and I am convinced that the truth is contained in what I relate.

minds, and that he was quite ready to yield to public opinion, if it were only to prove the folly of such a plan.

"I am satisfied," he said to M. de Caulaincourt, "that you should return to Paris, and offer to negotiate on this basis—and even that you take with you the marshals most enamoured of this project; you will rid me of them, which will be no small advantage, for I have men to fill their places—and whilst you occupy the Allies with this new proposition, I shall advance and finish all, sword in hand. You must hasten your departure, for, twenty-four hours hence, you will not be able to pass the outposts."

Napoleon seized at once the proposition of his abdication, as an opportunity of gaining two or three days more, of setting the vigilance of the enemy to sleep, of satisfying the marshals, and of ridding himself of some of them, who were become particularly troublesome. He added, however, that if the regency of his wife during the minority of his son, were accepted on conditions that were both honourable, and likely to support the new order of things, it was very possible he would consent. Notwithstanding that he spoke thus, there was very little chance that a negotiation should succeed, which he intended to interrupt so soon with the roar of his cannon.

Having so suddenly given this new aspect to affairs, the next thing was to choose the men who should accompany M. de Caulaincourt to Paris. M. de Caulaincourt wished to have Berthier with him, that he might add weight to military considerations, and Bassano, as he could best represent the feelings of Napoleon, but the Emperor would not listen to the proposal. He could not part with Berthier, who transmitted his orders to the army, and he said, that although Bassano was not in any way accountable for the late wars, that still he was responsible for them in the eyes of the public and of the allied sovereigns. He would only consent to M. de Caulaincourt's being accompanied by two or three of the marshals. He mentioned Ney first of all. "He is the bravest of men," said he, "but at this moment I have men that will fight as well as he, and you will rid me of him. But you must watch him, he is a mere child—if he fall into the hands of Alexander or Talleyrand, he is lost, and you will not be able to do anything with him. Take Marmont, also, he is devoted to me, and will assert my son's rights." Then reflecting for a moment, he said, "No, you cannot take Marmont, he is too much needed on the Essonne." Macdonald was then proposed, who would have more influence than Marmont, as he had never been considered a flatterer, and, besides being a perfectly honest man, he would defend the interests confided to him with as much zeal as if they were his own. Napoleon consented to this arrangement, and drew up himself the act of his conditional abdication, with the tact and haughtiness of language that ever distinguished the emanations of his pen. The marshals were then summoned to his presence.

"I have reflected," he said, "on our position, and on the senti-

ments with which it has inspired you, and I am resolved to test the sincerity of the allied sovereigns. They say that I am the only obstacle to the peace and happiness of the world. Well, then, to remove this prejudice, I am willing to sacrifice myself, and resign the throne, but on condition that it shall be transferred to my son, who shall be placed under the Regency of the Empress, during his minority. Does this arrangement suit you?"

At these words, which freed the marshals from all embarrassment, for it would suit them much better to live under the government of a woman and child of their own party, than under that of the Bourbons, who were strangers to them, they seized the hands of Napoleon, clasped them with the deepest emotion, and declared that at no period of his life had he shown himself so truly great.

When they had made an end of these demonstrations, which were by no means agreeable to Napoleon, though he did not show the annoyance he felt, he said to them, "Now that I have yielded to your wishes, it is your duty to defend the rights of my son, which, indeed, are your own; and to do so, not alone with your swords, but by your moral influence." He then said that he had appointed two of them to accompany the Duke of Vicence to Paris, and there negotiate the establishment of Maria Louisa's regency. He mentioned Ney and Marmont, saying how he had at first thought of Marmont, and why he had changed his mind. Ney was greatly flattered by being chosen, and Macdonald also, who felt it the more, as he had never been one of Napoleon's personal friends. "Marshal," said the Emperor to the latter, "you know that I have entertained prejudices against you, but that is past; I have full confidence in your honour, and am convinced that you will be the firmest defender of my son's interests."

Saying these words, he extended his hand, which Macdonald pressed warmly between his, and promised to justify the confidence the Emperor reposed in him on this occasion, and this promise he nobly fulfilled. Though Napoleon renounced the idea of sending Marmont to Paris, he left his plenipotentiaries free to take him with them as they passed through Essonne, if they thought he could be useful, in which case he would appoint some one to take his place. When these explanations were over, Napoleon read the following Act, which he had just drawn up.

"The allied powers having declared that the Emperor Napoleon was the only obstacle to the re-establishment of peace in Europe, the Emperor Napoleon, faithful to his oath, declares he is ready to descend from the throne, to quit France, or even life, for the welfare of his country, inseparable from the rights of his son, from those of the regency of the Empress, and the laws of the empire. Given at our palace of Fontainebleau, 4th April, 1814."

This act being received with universal approbation, Napoleon took a pen to sign it, but before affixing his signature, conscious of the importance of what he was about to do, notwithstanding the secret projects that he cherished, he felt a poignant regret, not for the throne, but for the chances that might be lost, and still think-

ing of the imprudent disposition of the enemy's forces, he cried, "And yet—yet we could beat them if we would." After this exclamation, which made all present droop their heads, he signed the document, handed it to M. de Caulaincourt, and dismissed his three ambassadors, still feeling more inclined to fight than to negotiate, and resolved, provided he did not lose the means that were in his hands, to interrupt, by the roar of cannon, this new negotiation that was about to be opened at Paris.

The marshals, accompanied by M. de Caulaincourt, immediately quitted Fontainebleau, in order to repair to the allied sovereigns, and by Napoleon's orders they were to pass through Essonne, and stop at Prince Schwarzenberg's head-quarters, to ask permission to pass the outposts. They arrived at Essonne about five in the evening, and immediately called on Marmont to acquaint him with their mission, and that he was authorised to accompany them. To their great surprise they found him cold, embarrassed, and disinclined to join them. Alas! the unfortunate man had yielded to the snares that had been weaving around him for the last four days!

His old aide-de-camp, M. de Montessuy, who had been sent to him, had arrived the previous evening, and given him letters from the Provisional Government, whose reasoning he supported with his private exhortations. It was not difficult for this envoy to speak warmly on the subject, for in common with all the more influential commercial men of Paris, he was firmly convinced that it was time to withdraw from an arbitrary government, which was so disastrously warlike, and which had thrown France into an abyss, from which it could not rescue her. The agent of the Provisional Government, knowing all the avenues to the heart with which he had to deal, had provided himself with a variety of arguments to accomplish his purpose. Having first dilated on the patriotism of Marmont, he next attacked his vanity and ambition. He did not forget to say that, in the last campaign, Marmont had covered himself with glory, that the eyes of France, of Europe, were fixed on him; that he alone, of all the marshals, had sufficient political knowledge to understand what present circumstances demanded; that those circumstances imperatively commanded to separate from Napoleon, and join and strengthen the Provisional Government authorised to conclude peace, to recall the Bourbons, and recalling, impose on them the restriction of a wise constitution. That by assisting in this excellent work, he would play the same part in the military, that Talleyrand played in the political, world; that under the Bourbons he had only to choose his place, for that no reward could be too great for the services he would have rendered, and he would thus unite the double advantage of serving his country, and of being magnificently rewarded.

There was, of course, a great deal of truth in all that was said to the unfortunate Marmont, and the man who said it was perfectly sincere. It is quite true that for simple citizens free from all personal engagements, and ignorant of the position of military

affairs, not knowing whether it was still possible to defeat the Allies, and to wrest conquered France from their hands, the best thing was to join the Bourbons, and, united with them, obtain a more equitable peace, and a less despotic government. But such considerations should not have had any weight with an officer laden with the gift of Napoleon, and still less with a soldier charged with such a trust as guarding the Essonne with 20,000 men, a trust not alone important to Napoleon but to France; for so long as there existed anywhere an imposing body of soldiery, it was not alone the fall of Napoleon, but that of France, that might be ameliorated by negotiation: a trust, in short, which, like that of every soldier, should be sacred until he was relieved from it.

No doubt, a soldier does not cease to be a citizen because he is a soldier, nor lose the right of interfering in the political interests of his country, because he sheds his blood for her. Marmont might have gone to Napoleon at Fontainebleau, forced an entrance into his palace, and into his heart, appealed to him in the name of France, implored him not to injure her further, but to yield the country to the Bourbons, who were more capable than he of reconciling it with Europe and restoring its liberty; he could have said all these things, if he believed them; and if he were not listened to, he could resign his sword, and with it, his post, to Napoleon, and then betake himself to the Provisional Government, taking with him a thing of great value, and of which he could dispose without ingratitude,—his example Gratitude may check personal interest, but cannot shackle duty. To deliver, surreptitiously, the possession on the Essonne to the enemy without the preliminaries we have mentioned, was, simply, treason.

And yet Marmont had not the soul of a traitor, far from it; but he was weak, vain, and ambitious, and, unfortunately, such failings are sufficient, under circumstances of great importance, to lead to acts that posterity stamps with reprobation. Marmont heard, with pleasure, the praises bestowed upon his military and political talents, the personal importance that he might acquire, and the services he could render, and, yielding to the deceitful bait of perhaps holding a position in the state equal to M. de Talleyrand's, he consented to treat with Prince Schwarzenberg, who for that purpose had come to Petit-Bourg. The following conditions were decided on, after many discussions. Marmont, with his *corps d'armée*, was, on the following day, to leave the Essonne, and advance along the Normandy route, where he was to place himself at the disposal of the Provisional Government, and as he could not conceal from himself the consequences of such an act—for he not only deprived Napoleon of a third of his army, but of the important post of the Essonne—he stipulated that, should Napoleon, in consequence of his desertion, fall into the hands of the allied sovereigns, they would respect his life, liberty, and past grandeur, and procure him a retreat at once suitable and safe. This single proviso, dictated by an honorable repentance, condemns the conduct of Mar-

mont, in proving the importance which he himself attached to his treason.

These conditions, reduced to writing, were sent to Prince Schwarzenberg. But it was not sufficient to be seduced himself, it was necessary that Marmont should gain over the generals under him, for, without their concurrence, it would be difficult to complete the stipulated arrangements. It was not a difficult task to win them, for they knew nothing, or almost nothing, of the general position of the army; nor did they know whether it was possible or not, by a last battle, to wrest France from the hands of the coalition; they only thought, what every one thought then, that Napoleon, having already caused the destruction of the greater part of his army, was now, in his obstinacy, about to expose the remainder to be slaughtered. Marmont, profiting of this state of opinion, told them how Napoleon, after committing fault upon fault, and permitting the Allies to enter Paris, was now mad enough to think of attacking 200,000 men with his 50,000, and thus risk the utter annihilation of the remnant of his army, and, by fighting in the capital itself, prepare them a tomb amidst the ruins of Paris and of France. There was, doubtless, a great deal of truth in what he said, and what could the generals reply to the images he conjured up? They said that it would not be right to follow Napoleon in this last extravagant adventure; that it was their duty to put an end to the misfortunes of France themselves. They promised, therefore, to follow Marmont to Versailles as soon as he should give the order. In their opinion this determination, which by the sequel has proved to be a defection, was but a necessary and legitimate separation from a madman.

Such was the entanglement in which the marshals found Marmont when they arrived at Essonne. At first he would not enter into any explanation, and only made weak excuses when they pressed him to accompany them to Paris. But as his mind was as incapable of concealing treason as inventing it, he finished by telling Macdonald and Caulaincourt all that had passed, at the same time palliating his own conduct as much as possible, by relating all the motives that had influenced him, and which, if the truth must be told, were much the same as the marshals had used to induce Napoleon to abdicate. Macdonald blamed him very much for what he had done, and took great pains to impress on him, that the best way to repair his fault would be to revoke his engagement with Prince Schwarzenberg, justifying his conduct on Napoleon's conditional abdication, a sacrifice that made it a point of honor to defend the rights of his son; and after this he should go to Paris to plead the cause of the King of Rome before the allied sovereigns. Marmont, without attempting to controvert this reasoning, appeared, however, unwilling to adopt a line of conduct that would be in direct contradiction to his former act. He was strangely perplexed. At one moment he felt inclined to go to Fontainebleau, tell Napoleon all that he had done, and implore his forgiveness; but either from

shame or fear, this better feeling passed away, and he determined to adopt Macdonald's advice, to retract his engagement with Prince Schwarzenberg, and then go with the others to Paris, to support the King of Rome's cause, taking care to suspend, until his return, all movement in his *corps d'armée*.

Accordingly he summoned his generals, told them of the new state of things, of Napoleon's conditional abdication, and the negotiations that were about to commence in consequence, and arranged with them that nothing was to be done until they should receive fresh orders from him. He then rejoined M. de Caulaincourt and the marshals, and permission to pass the outposts having arrived, he followed them to Petit-Bourg. He would not enter at the same time as they, under pretext of having a private interview with Prince Schwarzenberg, before taking part in the general conferences. When M. de Caulaincourt and the marshals had been admitted into the château, they had some very lively altercations, first with Prince Schwarzenberg, who sustained, with imperturbable calmness, the cool policy of the Austrian Cabinet, and afterwards, with the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, who spoke in the harshest manner both of Napoleon and France. This prince had served formerly under Marshal Ney, who had never shewn him much favour, and who now told him, with great haughtiness, that if any Court in Europe had lost the right of blaming the ambition of France, it was most certainly that of Wurtemberg. They were engaged in these disagreeable recriminations when the permission to enter Paris, demanded by Napoleon's representatives, arrived.

They left immediately, and outside the château met Marmont, who was waiting for them, indebted, as he said, to Prince Schwarzenberg's honor for the revocation of his promise. But, notwithstanding this assertion on his part, there is every reason to believe that the prince only gave him a temporary release from his engagement, merely during negotiations, whose success he felt to be impossible, and on condition of fulfilling his promise, should the negotiations fail. The fact that the Allies immediately announced the convention signed by Marshal Marmont proves that this was the case.

M. de Caulaincourt and the marshals arrived at the Hôtel Talleyrand between one and two in the morning. Great was the excitement amongst the crowd of interested or curious persons, who day and night surrounded the doors of the Provisional Government, when it was known that these men were come to offer that Napoleon should abdicate in favour of the King of Rome and Maria Louisa, and that they were about to support this negotiation with all the authority of the army. Terrific was the idea of Napoleon acting under the names of his wife and son, and dealing forth vengeance on those who had abandoned him. The number of the Royalists had increased greatly since the publication of the deposition, on the evening of the 2nd April, some gradually feeling emboldened to express openly sentiments they had always cherished in their

hearts; while others became converts to royalty, when they perceived it to be the road to success. The number of the compromised and the anxious had consequently been considerably augmented, and so great was the alarm excited, that M. de Talleyrand —the most deeply compromised of all—asked himself whether it were not better to pause in a course where he had taken so many steps that might be deemed irrevocable.

In fact, worried by M. de Vitrolles, who insisted, as we have said, on the immediate and unconditional admission of the Count d'Artois into Paris, M. de Talleyrand was considering these questions, and actually about to give a letter for the prince to M. de Vitrolles, when the marshals were announced.

Alarmed at this unexpected arrival, he withheld the letter, and requested M. de Vitrolles to wait until every doubt should be removed, to which the latter consented, as he did not wish to rejoin the prince until he should be able to bring him certain and definite information.

The first interview M. de Caulaincourt and the marshals had with the members of the Provisional Government was short and cold, and might have become stormy, but that the question under discussion was to be decided elsewhere.

The night was far advanced, and the King of Prussia had retired to the mansion in which he had taken up his residence; but the Emperor Alexander, being in the Hôtel Talleyrand, received the envoys of Napoleon at once. Talleyrand, fearing the mobility of this prince, and the influence that the new arrivals might have on him, endeavoured to fix more firmly in his mind the ideas that he had already instilled into it, representing to him that Napoleon, the personification of war, could no longer be thought of, that Maria Louisa was only Napoleon under another name; that it would be ridiculous to think of Bernadotte, and that, all things considered, the Bourbons alone were admissible; and besides that, during the last five days, every public proceeding had been influenced by this opinion; and that common sense as well as honour required that they should not abandon men who had compromised themselves on the faith of the allied sovereigns, in whose honour and power they were justified in believing. Not satisfied with these precautions, M. de Talleyrand placed near Alexander, as a kind of guardian, M. de Dessoles, a man, as we have said before, of great firmness of mind, who favoured the Bourbons from conviction, and not from interest, and who was capable of asserting his opinion against every possible contradiction. Though he did not possess the same right as Marshals Ney and Macdonald to speak in the name of the army, he had some claim to reply to those who, in representing its opinions, did not confine themselves to the exact truth.

Alexander received M. de Caulaincourt and the marshals with that courtesy that was natural to him, and which he never more willingly exercised than towards the military men of France. Having complimented them on the prowess they had shown during

the last campaign, and the heroic devotion with which they had fulfilled their military duties, he added that these duties being now accomplished, it was time to choose between the welfare of their country and that of an individual, and retracing, as he often did, the origin of the present war, as far back as 1812, he asserted that it was Napoleon alone who had provoked it. He said that, in 1809, 1810, and 1811, Russia had patiently borne all the expenses of the alliance, and, in conformity with Napoleon's political plans against England, had almost totally deprived her subjects of the advantages of commerce, when Napoleon, as inconstant as he was despotic, invented a new commercial legislation, and proposed imposing it on his allies; and that when he (Alexander) had made him the most reasonable and friendly representations on this subject, and was about to yield to these demands, notwithstanding their injustice, Napoleon suddenly invaded his dominions, and forced him to take up arms in his defence; that, aided by the severity of the climate, and the courage of his army, he had repelled the invader, and would have stopped short on the Vistula, but that oppressed Europe had implored his assistance; that after the battles of Lutzen and Bautzen the allied sovereigns wished to come to terms with Napoleon, offering to allow him to retain his immense conquests, and only seeking to lighten the yoke that pressed upon them, but he distinctly refused; that again on the Rhine they stopped, and offered him that beautiful river as a frontier, but he did not reply; that at Châtillon they had offered him France, such as it was in the days of Louis XIV. and XV., but that he had again refused, and they were obliged to come to seek in Paris that peace which they could not find elsewhere; that having entered Paris, they had no idea of humbling France or imposing a government on her; that they were seeking in all sincerity to discover who France really desired, who, in assuring her happiness, would secure the peace of Europe; that they had not entered into any compact with the Bourbons, and that if they were inclined to favour them, it was more from necessity than choice; and that so great was their deference for the opinion of the French nation, they were quite ready to adopt the government that the deputies of the army who were now present should propose, provided that government was consistent with the tranquillity of Europe. Then, redoubling his flatteries to them, Alexander added—

"And, gentlemen, arrange the matter between yourselves,—adopt what constitution you please, choose the chief that will best suit this constitution, and should it be from amongst yourselves, who possess so many claims, both from your services and your glory, that this new sovereign will be chosen, we most willingly consent, and shall recognize him with pleasure, provided he neither threatens our peace or independence."

Marshal Ney, whose natural impetuosity always impelled him to take the lead, hastened to reply to the courteous address of the Czar, and entering rather too much into his views, said, that they

had suffered more than any one else from the incessant wars of which Europe complained, that they had been the first victims of this despotic ruler, as was testified by the bodies of their companions in arms strewn all over the continent, and none could desire his removal from the throne more warmly than they. There may have been much truth, but certainly very little tact in this reply, which was ill calculated to influence the Allies, whose plans could only be modified by exaggerating the devotion of the army to Napoleon. It produced an evident impression on Alexander, which the companions of the too impetuous marshal perceived to their great regret. Then continuing his discourse, and replying to Alexander's flattering hint of choosing a candidate from amongst themselves, a hint which, had it been serious, could only have referred to Bernadotte, he insinuated that amongst military men only one had attained a position that could entitle him to rule, and that he, forsaken by Fortune, had, by his abdication, renounced his claim; after him, no soldier could entertain such pretensions, that the only one who could or would perhaps dare to think of it, would be, covered as he was with French blood, abhorrent to the nation; that, therefore, Napoleon's son, under the regency of his mother, was the only form of government that could be offered to France and the army.

This proposal once made, Ney and Macdonald successively defended the cause of the King of Rome, with a vehemence and eloquence peculiarly military. They exclaimed against the recall of the Bourbons, and proceeded to demonstrate the difficulty of getting them accepted by this young France, that was not acquainted with them, and the great difficulty of making them accept this France, which they did not understand, and the probable consequence of seeing arise between the throne and the people, an opposition of sentiments that would lead to painful consequences, and destroy those hopes of peace which Europe founded on the restoration of the ancient dynasty. They then sought to impress on Alexander the necessity of leaving new generations under a government of the same nature as themselves, and composed of men who had administered public affairs during the last twenty years, men who detested, as much as Europe herself, the system of continual warfare, of which they had borne all the burden, and besides, would have at their head a princess whom the Allies could not distrust, since she was the daughter of one of themselves. Then speaking for the army in particular, the marshals said that something was due to men who, during twenty years, had been pouring out their blood for France, and were still ready to shed the last drop again if necessary; men who alone, at this moment, were able to check the desperation of Napoleon, and to whom it was at least due to place them under the authority of the son of their General, to whom they had devoted their lives, and who, during twenty years had led them to victory, and not under the government of princes who would detest while they flattered them.

Considerations expressed with so much warmth, did not fail to produce a visible effect on Alexander. He sought by opposing the opinions of the marshals, rather to induce them to give expression to what they thought, than to contradict them; he cited the recent acts of the Senate, pointed out all that had been done towards the restoration of the ancient dynasty, and observed, the most esteemed men of the Revolution and the Empire had unhesitatingly declared in favour of the Restoration.

The mere mention of the Senate roused the anger of Ney. "That despicable Senate," he cried, "that might have spared us so many afflictions, by opposing some resistance to Napoleon's passion for conquest; that despicable Senate, always ready to obey the wishes of the man they now call a tyrant—by what right do they raise their voice at this moment? These men were mute when they ought to have spoken, and how dare they presume to speak now, when they ought to observe silence? Most of these gentlemen of the Senate enjoyed their emoluments, whilst we were bedewing Europe with our blood. It is not they that have a right to complain of the Imperial sway, but we soldiers, who have borne all its rigours; but if in defiance of all justice they pretend to claim authority now, bring them face to face with us, and you will see, sire, whether they will dare to speak in our presence."

Alexander was so much influenced by this discourse, that he was about to consent to a conference between the marshals and some of the principal senators, when General Dessoles, seeing what ground had been already lost, interfered with vehemence, and indeed with a certain rudeness. He was interrupted several times, and the debate became confused and violent, when Dessoles, seeing himself alone and unsupported, appealed to the honour of Alexander, saying that too much had been already done towards the recall of the Bourbons to recede now; and that a number of honest men, relying on the good faith of the allied sovereigns, had already compromised themselves, whom it would be dishonourable to desert.

This argument, true, though somewhat egotistical, and which had been already adduced by M. de Talleyrand, was ill suited to the noble character of General Dessoles, who was entirely guided by disinterested convictions. It was, besides, not a little offensive to Alexander, who replied with pride that no person should ever have to regret confidence placed in him or his allies, but that here they must be guided by higher considerations than the interests of individuals, when the welfare, not alone of France, but of all Europe, was at stake. Then putting an end to an interview that had lasted nearly all night, he graciously dismissed the marshals, remarking that he alone of the allied sovereigns was present, and appointing them an interview for the next day, when he would inform them of the decision of the Allies.

Although so much had been already done towards the restoration of the Bourbons, there was still some hope for Maria Louisa and

the King of Rome, but the marshals, overrating the chances in their favour, left the Hôtel Talleyrand with greater confidence of ultimate success than they had reason to entertain. Alexander had heard them with so much politeness, had treated them with so much attention, nay, respect, that, still excited by the discussion, they had had, they left him in the highest spirits, and finding in the antechamber numbers of persons who had formerly crowded the antechambers of Napoleon, they could not restrain their anger, though they were in a short time to exhibit in their own persons a spectacle which now shocked them so much in others. They immediately renewed their discussion with the members of the Provisional Government, and, in truth, in far less measured terms than with Alexander. General Beurnonville was about to address Macdonald, when the marshal repelled him, saying, "Begone! your conduct has obliterated a friendship of twenty years' duration." Afterwards, meeting General Dupont, Macdonald said to him, "It is very possible, General, that you have been treated with injustice and even cruelty, but you have very badly chosen both the time and manner of avenging yourself." Marshal Ney was equally unreserved in the expression of his sentiments, and some disagreeable scenes might have taken place, had not M. de Talleyrand reminded them that it would be disrespectful to the Emperor of Russia to continue such discussions in his apartments, and then invited them to come down to that part of the mansion occupied by him, where they would be in the apartments of the Provisional Government. "We don't acknowledge your Provisional Government, and have nothing to say to it," replied Macdonald, and left the house abruptly with his colleagues.

Napoleon's negotiators went immediately to Marshal Ney's house to pass the rest of the night, and await the reply of the allied sovereigns, which they were to receive in the course of the morning.

Whilst this important question, with all its chances of success or defeat, was under discussion in the hôtel Rue Saint Florentin, it was very quickly decided elsewhere, not by reasons true or false, but by treachery, the worst of all arguments. Napoleon, as we have seen, attached very little importance to the negotiations undertaken by the marshals, and was solely occupied with his project of crossing the Essonne, with the 70,000 men he still had, and of either overwhelming the allies, or perishing with them amidst the ruins of Paris. He sent for Marmont, who commanded the division on the Essonne, in order to give him his last instructions; and foreseeing that Marmont might have accompanied the marshals to Paris, he ordered that, in his absence, the general left in command should immediately repair to Fontainebleau.

This commision was confided to Colonel Gourgaud. This officer, brave and devoted, but who did not always transmit the Emperor's orders in the spirit in which they were given, appeared

surprised not to find Marmont at his post, and asked in an almost menacing tone, for the officer left in command. From his manner one would suppose that he was the representative of an irritated master, who was aware of what had taken place between Marmont and Prince Schwarzenberg at Petit-Bourg. But it was nothing of the kind. Napoleon and Gourgaud were wholly ignorant of the matter, and the latter, speaking with the harshness habitual to the members of the imperial staff, decided without intending it an event of the last importance. Napoleon now experienced in a most painful manner, that there are times, when fate, that once seemed to turn our very mistakes to our advantage, suddenly changing her plan, punishes us even for the faults of others.

It was old General Souham that was in command during the absence of Marmont. Colonel Gourgaud spoke to him in the same haughty tone, as well as to the Generals Compans, Bordessoulle, and Meynadier; and to add to this unfortunate complication, a written order arrived at the same moment, directed to General Souham, commanding him to repair immediately to Fontainebleau. This was the usual practice in the Imperial staff. that a verbal order from the Emperor should be followed by a written one; but old Souham, struck by Colonel Gourgaud's manner, and made suspicious by a consciousness of guilt, forgot this, and immediately conceived the most alarming apprehensions. He thought that Napoleon had discovered everything—not alone the secret convention between Marmont and Prince Schwarzenberg, but also its approval by the Generals of Division of the Sixth Corps, and he believed they were summoned to Fontainebleau to be arrested, or perhaps shot. General Souham was a general of the revolution, an excellent soldier, an old friend of Moreau's, entertaining for Napoleon the same concealed hatred as the other generals of the Rhine army, and complaining, like Vandamme, and with as good reason, of not having been created marshal. He was still a republican in his heart, and sufficiently accustomed to revolutionary proceedings to believe Napoleon capable of the most violent measures. He immediately assembled his colleagues, Generals Compans, Bordessoulle, and Meynadier, and said it was quite evident that Napoleon knew what had occurred, and that they were now summoned to his presence to be shot, a finale for which, he assured them, he had not the least desire. The other generals declared that they were no more ambitious of such an end than he; and after some objections that were silenced by repeating that Napoleon knew all, they consented to Souham's proposal, which was, not to await the return of Marshal Marmont, but conclude themselves the treaty entered into with Prince Schwarzenberg, and crossing the Essonne, place themselves under the orders of the Provisional Government. So impressed was Souham with the idea of the Emperor's desire to secure his person, that he stationed a cavalry picket on the road to Fontainebleau,

with orders to arrest the first officer of Napoleon's staff that should appear, in case Napoleon, in his anxiety to be obeyed, should despatch another messenger.

Colonel Fabvier, of Marmont's staff, was sincerely afflicted by these headlong resolutions, and endeavoured to calm Souham, by showing him that he exaggerated the danger of his situation, and that, besides, the precautions he had just taken, of guarding the Fontainebleau route, ought to tranquillize him; and, in addition to this, he need only cross to the other side of the Essonne to be ready to escape at the first signal of danger, but that by commanding the troops to pass the river, he would merit, and perhaps incur, the punishment that he dreaded now without cause. But nothing could calm his excitement; and, persisting in his error, he replied to the excellent reasons of Colonel Fabvier, with the vulgar adage to the soldiery, "*It is better to kill the devil than be killed by him.*" He consequently persisted in his error.

Under the influence of this fatal delusion, the Generals of Division of the Sixth Corps informed Prince Schwarzenberg, or those who represented him, of the movement they were about to make, and fearing strong opposition from the troops, they ordered that all the regimental officers, from the colonels to the sub-lieutenants, should march with their men to their posts, lest the officers assembling together, should communicate their suspicions to each other, and, divining the plans of their superiors, should rise against them.

These precautions being taken, the sixth corps, conducted by its generals, crossed the Essonne at four o'clock on the morning of the 5th of April, whilst the marshals were in conference in the Rue Saint Florentin. The troops advanced in silence towards the outposts of the enemy. The soldiers obeyed, ignorant of the crime they were unconsciously committing; some supposing the movement was a consequence of the abdication, of which they had heard the evening before, whilst others thought it was a concerted movement to surprise the enemy. However, when they perceived that the allied troops remained peaceably on the road side, and allowed them to pass without firing, they began to conceive some suspicions, which were soon changed into murmurs. Some officers, accomplices in the treason, tried to pacify them by various pretexts, and induce them to continue their march. But the murmurs increased at every step, and everything seemed to announce an outbreak when they should arrive at Versailles. Thus the sixth corps passed over to the enemy, with the exception of the division commanded by General Lucotte, who suspected that something was wrong, and refused to obey the order to march. The line of the Essonne was thus left unprotected, and the sixth corps, so necessary for the execution of his projects, was totally lost to Napoleon.

The brave Colonel Fabvier, not being able to prevent this terri-

ble resolve, had no other resource than to endeavour to anticipate its effects by hastening to visit Marshal Marmont at Paris. But, unfurnished with credentials, he found great difficulty in passing the enemy's out-posts, and only succeeded by dint of solicitations and false pretences. He arrived at length at the Talleyrand Hotel, but not meeting there the chief he sought, he hastened to Marshal Ney's, where he found the three marshals together, and informed Marmont of what we have just related.

On receiving this terrible information, Marmont experienced violent emotion. "I am lost!" he exclaimed, "dishonoured for ever." Unfortunate man, he was not sufficiently convinced of the truth of what he said, or he would have made a last effort to escape all share in the responsibility of this defection. But he contented himself with lamenting, complaining, and asking consolation from his colleagues (very little disposed to offer him any), instead of going in person to Versailles, and bringing back the troops to their posts, at any risk. Whilst he was consuming the time in useless bewailings, a messenger from the Emperor of Russia announced to Napoleon's representatives that they were waited for at *Rue Saint-Florentin*. They set off, followed by Marmont, who still continued his useless lamentations, without proceeding to act; the marshals had lost all hope, since learning the late intelligence that had confounded them.

Whilst this scene was taking place on the Versailles route, the authors of the restoration of the Bourbons had been very busy. The Emperor Alexander had appeared so moved by the language of the marshals, and the Allies themselves, though naturally inclined to favour the Bourbons, had appeared so sensible to the advantages of immediately finishing the war by coming to terms with Napoleon, that the Royalists, assembled at M. de Talleyrand's, became terribly alarmed. They repeated to the Emperor Alexander all they had so often told him during the past five days: they despatched General Beurnonville to the King of Prussia, to repeat the same things to him; there was no occasion to try fresh persuasions with Prince Schwarzenberg, but they begged him not to waver. In a word, they neglected no means to prevent a change of fortune in Napoleon's favour, a change that depended solely on the versatile will of Alexander. As to the rest, these efforts were nearly superfluous, for there was no occasion for using any argument with the allied powers to show them that the Bourbons were much better than Napoleon, acting under the shelter of his wife's regency; but the Allies dreaded to drive Napoleon to despair, and this was the only motive that could make them hesitate. However, after having assembled at the Hôtel Saint-Florentin, and after having deliberated, the representatives of the coalition determined to persevere; in the first place because they had already gone very far in pronouncing the deposition of Napoleon and his heirs, and secondly, because the Bourbons were much more satisfactory for them than

a regency, which would leave Napoleon the temptation and the means of resuming the sceptre, and with the sceptre the sword, and lastly, because the work of throwing off the common oppressor was so far advanced, that it was better to finish, even at the risk of another effusion of blood, than to abandon the nearly-completed task. The representatives of the allied powers, therefore, commissioned Alexander to declare that they still persisted in what they had originally resolved, and this they did without infusing into his mind an energy which they did not themselves possess, or without inspiring him with a zeal for the Bourbons, in which they were deficient.

Alexander, surrounded by the King of Prussia and the allied ministers, received the marshals, presented by M. de Caulaincourt, with the same affability as on the previous evening. He expressed once more the sentiments, repeated to satiety during the last few days, that the allied sovereigns had come to Paris to seek peace, and not by any means to humble France, or impose a government on her; then he repeated, in a formal and determined manner, the reasons already quoted against maintaining Napoleon on the throne of France, but he mentioned in a manner much less positive the reasons that might be alleged against the regency of Maria Louisa. He spoke on the latter part of the subject in a manner somewhat vague, and which left an opening to the renewal of the discussion. The question was, in fact, again opened; the marshals repeated, with extreme vehemence, what they had already said against the recall of the Bourbons, and almost assumed a threatening attitude in speaking of the forces that Napoleon still commanded, and of the devotedness he would find them testify in defending the rights of the King of Rome. Alexander, visibly perplexed, looked now at the speakers, then at his allies, as if he were thinking of a solution different to that he had been commissioned to announce,* when an aide-de-camp suddenly enters, and addressing the Emperor in a low voice, says something in Russian. M. de Caulaincourt, who has a slight knowledge of this language, thinks, from what he overhears, that the Czar is informed of the defection of the 6th corps, of which Alexander was evidently ignorant, as his surprise testified. "The entire corps," said the Emperor, inclining his ear, for he was a little deaf, "Yes, the entire corps," replied the aide-de-camp.

Alexander returned to the negotiators, but with an absent air, and scarcely appearing to hear what was said. He afterwards withdrew for a moment to converse with his allies. Whilst the three negotiators were alone (Marmont had not dared to accompany them this time), M. de Caulaincourt told the two marshals that all was lost, for he had not the slightest doubt that the intelligence just brought to the Emperor Alexander, was the defection

* I speak on the written authority of men the most worthy of belief, and the least hostile to Marshal Marmont and the Bourbons.

of the 6th corps, and this information would entirely change the dispositions of the Czar. Alexander soon returned; but now firm in his attitude, decided in his language, he declared that both Napoleon and Maria Louisa should be given up, and that the Bourbons alone suited France as well as Europe, and as to the rest, the army, in whose name they spoke, was at least divided, for he had just learned that an entire corps had passed over to the Provisional Government, that the entire army would, undoubtedly, follow this good example, and would, by so doing, render France a service at least equal to those her soldiers had already rendered; that her glory and her interests would be carefully respected; that the princes now called to the throne would look to the army as their support and their guide; that, as to what concerned Napoleon, he had only to trust to the honour of the allied sovereigns, and that both he and his family would be treated in a manner conformable to their past greatness. Having spoken thus, Alexander conversed with the marshals in succession; he treated Macdonald with the esteem that was his due; he flattered Ney in a way to turn the head, unfortunately weak, of this hero; he detained M. de Caulaincourt some minutes. Then, in a short conversation, he signified to the latter that the late vaccillations of the Allies had been terminated by the occurrence of the past night on the Essonne, for from that moment the Allies saw clearly that Napoleon could make no further efforts, and that he must submit to his fate. The Emperor Alexander renewed the assurance he had already given, of the most generous treatment for Napoleon; he did not deny that he had, perhaps, gone too far in offering the island of Elba, but he added that he would keep his word, and promised formally to obtain a principality in Italy for Maria Louisa and the King of Rome. He then dismissed M. de Caulaincourt, pressing him to return soon, furnished with powers from his master to conclude this negotiation, for Napoleon's cause was every hour losing what that of the Bourbons was gaining, and the indemnifications that the Allies were disposed to make would diminish in the same proportion.

M. de Caulaincourt, left alone with Macdonald, who had not quitted him, prepared to return to Fontainebleau. Ney, surrounded by the members and ministers of the Provisional Government, was overwhelmed with attentions, capable of shaking a firmer head than his. Marshal Marmont had gone to M. de Talleyrand's, where he was exposed to fresh seductions. He arrived there, confounded with what had taken place on the Essonne, and expecting to find in the looks of the bystanders a judgment that he feared would be severe, especially when he remembered what the marshals, his colleagues, had said in the morning; but instead of expressions condemnatory or even equivocal, he met on all sides the most flattering approval, and the most expressive pressures of the hand. He was told, that after having heroically done his duty in the last campaign, he had put

the *acme* to his noble conduct in saving France by the determination he had taken; that there was no price too high for such a service, and that the Bourbons would be eager to acquit the debt, however great the amount. The unfortunate Marmont was at first about to protest against the suppositious merits that were attributed to him, but, assailed by felicitations, he had not strength of mind sufficient to repulse such honours, so many brilliant hopes, and without suspecting, without wishing it, in accepting these compliments he accepted the reprobation which is for ever inseparably attached to his memory.

In times of revolution, vicissitudes of fortune are sudden and unforeseen. Whilst the frequenters of the Talleyrand mansion, delighted to learn the defection of the sixth corps, and the definite resolutions of the Allies, were overloading Marmont with compliments, and thus endeavouring to associate him with their joys and their hopes, a piece of intelligence suddenly damped their exultation. A report was spread that a military sedition had burst out at Versailles amongst the soldiers of the sixth corps; that these soldiers declared themselves deceived by their generals, whom they threatened to shoot; and, in short, there was no saying what might be the consequences of this accident. Had the Royalists preserved a coolness, which indeed is seldom exhibited under such circumstances, they ought to have known that a corps of 15,000 men, separated from the main body of the French army, and completely surrounded by the allied troops, would be annihilated or disarmed, had they attempted to undo what they had done. But people do not reason so logically during the tumult of revolution. It was feared that this corps, repenting in a burst of heroic despair, might rekindle the passions of the troops still remaining at Fontainebleau, as well as the warlike ardour of Napoleon, which would excite the Parisians, who, though apparently so tranquil, were impatient of the presence of strangers, and so effect a complete change in the aspect of affairs. The Royalists were exceedingly alarmed.

There was only one man who could hinder the fortunate event of the past night becoming so suddenly disastrous; this man was Marshal Marmont. This marshal ought naturally to have great influence over the troops of the sixth corps, and be more capable than any other person of keeping them in the way in which they had entered. The Royalists surrounded the marshal, and begged him to finish the work he had begun. They told him for the hundredth time, that the re-establishment of Napoleon, in opposition to all Europe, was impossible; that the European Powers, even if conquered before the walls of Paris, would not consider themselves defeated, but would renew the war with fresh vigour; that France would be consequently exposed to a frightful prolongation of evils; that peace, with the frontiers of 1790—that the Bourbons, with legal guarantees—would be preferable to such risks; that, moreover, he, Marmont, having taken one decided step, having brought

away his *corps d'armée*, it was now impossible for him to retrace his steps, his conduct would be inexplicable, and being already compromised with Napoleon, he would then be irrevocably compromised with the Bourbons.

Marmont did not wish to be compromised with everybody, and, besides, after having had the weakness to accept unmerited congratulations, he wished to acquire incontestable titles to royal favour, he therefore resolved to set off for Versailles, and win back the mutinous troops of the sixth corps. On arriving, he found the soldiers in open insurrection assembled outside the town, and refusing to return to their ranks, notwithstanding the efforts of General Bordessoulle, whom they bitterly reproached for what they had been induced to do. The unexpected arrival of Marshal Marmont caused the soldiers evident satisfaction. As he was absent at the moment when the defection took place, they supposed it was accomplished without his concurrence, and seeing him now arrive, they were persuaded he had come to extricate them from the consequences of the false step they had made. Besides, Marmont had won their sympathies by his brilliant bravery in the last campaign. He presented himself before them, appealed to their recollections, retraced the perilous circumstances in which he had commanded them, and where he was always foremost in the fight. Having thus awakened their acclamations, and proved his claim to their confidence, he said, that having always led them in the path of honour, he would continue to guide them in the same way still, when the road would be clear before them, but disturbed as their spirits now were, they could only be the instruments of disorder, destined to be conquered by the first enemy they should meet; he therefore implored them to return to their duty, and take their places again under their chiefs, promising, when they should have again become a real army, he would return amongst them, and remain with them until France should have passed through the present fearful crisis.

Marmont said no more, and the soldiers attributed his reserve to the vicinity of the enemy, by whom they were surrounded on all sides; they became calm, fell into rank, and appeared inclined to await patiently the part their marshal should appoint them to take. As to the rest, a few moments' submission was sufficient to prove that there was nothing more to be feared from their mutiny. The Allies were naturally anxious to place between the sixth corps and Fontainebleau an impassable barrier.

Marmont returned immediately to Paris, to announce the successful result of his short mission, to receive the flatteries of the Rue Saint Florentin mansion, that had destroyed him, and of which he was no longer independent. He was again surrounded by Royalists, overloaded with flatteries greater than he had yet received, and promises of eternal gratitude, which on the part of peoples and kings is not always assured even to services the purest and most honourable.

Thus was this defection, commonly called Marshal Marmont's treason, accomplished. If the act of this marshal had consisted in preferring the Bourbons to Napoleon, peace to war, the hope of liberty to despotism, nothing could have been more simple, more legitimate, more avowable; but, setting aside all the duties of gratitude, we cannot forget that Marmont possessed at that time the personal confidence of Napoleon, that he was under arms, and occupied on the Essonne a post of great importance; to abandon this position at such a moment, with his entire *corps d'armée*, in consequence of a secret convention with Prince Schwarzenberg, was not acting like a citizen, free to choose between one government and another, it was playing the part of a soldier who deserts to the enemy. Marmont has since asserted that this deplorable act had but one part, and it is true that after having himself planned and accomplished the commencement, his generals, misled by a false terror, resumed the interrupted act, and completed it on their own responsibility, but Marmont, appropriating the termination to himself by his conduct at Versailles, assumed the entire responsibility, and, loaded with this heavy burden, his memory will descend to posterity.

The commotion at Fontainebleau was quite as great, but of a different nature. The three plenipotentiaries returned thither towards the evening of the 5th, to deliver the definite reply of the allied sovereigns. Marshal Ney, overloaded with caresses by the Provisional Government, had undertaken to obtain and bring back Napoleon's abdication *pure et simple*. He had set off without his two colleagues, either through a wish to be alone, or through eagerness to keep his promise. He found Napoleon aware of the defection of the sixth corps, and appreciating better than any one the military and political consequences of the act, but as to the rest, calm, exhibiting a haughtiness inversely proportionate to his fortunes, and by no means disposed to reveal his feelings, except to the two or three who exclusively possessed his confidence. Napoleon thanked Marshal Ney politely for having fulfilled his mission, but exhibited no inclination to make him his confidant, or take him into his counsels, for Napoleon divined from the marshal's eagerness to arrive first that he was anxious to contribute to the *denoûement*, and perhaps arrogate the merit to himself. The Emperor listened, almost without reply, to all the marshal said; and, indeed, the latter expatiated at considerable length, on the irrevocable determination of the allied sovereigns, on the impossibility of inducing them to change, on the kind of fascination with which the Parisians spoke of peace, and the Bourbons on the dismemberment of the army, and the impossibility of inducing the military to make fresh efforts, and *à propos* of the blood shed by these soldiers, he spoke of existing misfortunes with truth, but without consideration for the feelings of the Emperor, for his warrior soul was

more strong than tender. However, Ney did not for a moment forget the respect due to a master, under whose rule both he and his companions in arms had acquired the habit of profound submission.* Napoleon, after having listened coolly and patiently to the marshal, told him he would think over the matter and let him know, next day, his determination. After this interview, Marshal Ney, eager to fulfil his promise, wrote a letter to the Prince of Bénévento, in which, relating his return to Fontainebleau, after the failure of the morning negotiations, "a failure," he wrote, "which was owing to *an unexpected event*," (the event of the Essonne), he added, "that the Emperor Napoleon, *convinced of the critical position in which he had placed France, and recognizing the impossibility of saving her himself, he appeared decided to give in his abdication, pure et simple.*" After this assertion, which was, at best, premature, the marshal said he hoped to be the bearer of the authentic and formal act of abdication. The letter was dated Fontainebleau, half-past eleven in the evening.

M. de Caulaincourt and Marshal Macdonald arrived immediately after Marshal Ney. They found Napoleon already sound asleep, and after waking him, they related as minutely as Marshal Ney, but in different terms, all that had taken place at Paris, since the previous evening, that is to say, their negotiations, at first successful, at least in appearance, but followed by a complete failure,

* It is as difficult to know what passed in this interview as in the preceding, of which we have spoken. Marshal Ney has left no written record, and Napoleon, in his St. Helena Memoirs, through a feeling of respect for the misfortunes and bravery of the marshal, has observed a profound silence on the subject. But it is easy to perceive by some of his expressions, that he was deeply sensible of the attitude assumed by the marshal during the last days of the empire. The marshal was wrong to boast, on his return to Paris, of having forced Napoleon to abdicate. That he did so, to General Dupont, the War Minister, is patent, for the latter has recorded the circumstance in his memoirs. Everything proves that on this occasion the marshal accuses himself without grounds, and that had he confined himself, in the scene at Fontainebleau, to a want of consideration for fallen greatness, without indulging in violence of language, which would have been scarcely possible. What induces us to adopt this opinion is, that M. de Caulaincourt, on arriving towards midnight, that is to say, some minutes after Ney's departure, found Napoleon perfectly calm, not exhibiting, either in gesture or language any trace of the emotion which would naturally have remained after a violent scene, nor had he come to any determination. M. de Caulaincourt in a written record, says positively, that in comparing what he had seen at Fontainebleau, with what he heard a few days later, touching Marshal Ney's conduct, he could not understand the reports that had been circulated, nor could he help thinking that Ney had been guilty of self-calumny. M. de Caulaincourt was certainly not pleased with either Marshal Ney's language or conduct at *l'Hotel Saint-Florentin*, but he could not believe in the scenes of violence reported at Paris, and which many historians have since quoted. As to Marshal Macdonald, though in his manuscript memoirs he manifests his discontent at Marshal Ney's conduct, yet he relates the scenes in which he took part in a manner that entirely excludes the idea of Napoleon being subjected to violence. We cite these two eminent persons, the only ocular witnesses who have written the scenes of Fontainbleau in 1814, and the most credible amongst all who might have written them, the persons most likely to tell things exactly as they were. We flatter ourselves that we have in this instance, as in every other, recorded the truth as closely as it could be ascertained, and we do not hesitate to assert that every recital that oversteps the limits within which we have confined ourselves, are, either utterly false or strangely exaggerated.

after the defection of the 6th corps. They did not conceal from Napoleon, that their intimate conviction, however painful it might be to declare it, was that there was no other course left for him than to abdicate unconditionally, if he did not wish to render his personal position still worse, and deprive his wife, his son, and his brothers of every chance of a suitable appanage, and entail on France new and irremediable misfortunes. This advice, repeated so soon again, though now, in the most respectful terms, annoyed Napoleon. He replied with a kind of impatience that he had still too many resources to accept such a proposition. "And Eugene," he cried, "Augereau, Suchet, Soult, and the fifty thousand men I have here—do you think these are nothing? As to the rest, we shall see. Farewell till to-morrow." Then, intimating that it was late, he recommended his negotiators to take some repose, showing at the same time, how highly he appreciated their generous and delicate-minded mode of action.

Hardly had he dismissed them, than he recalled M. de Caulaincourt, whom he did not esteem more highly than Marshal Macdonald, but in whom he was accustomed to confide. Every trace of ill-humour had disappeared. Napoleon told M. de Caulaincourt how much he was pleased with the conduct of Marshal Macdonald, who, though so long antagonistic to him, acted in this trying moment like a devoted friend, he took an indulgent view of Marshal Ney's mobility, and speaking of the conduct of his lieutenants with a slightly-disdainful gentleness, said, to M. de Caulaincourt:—"Ah! Caulaincourt, men, men! My marshals would blush to act as Marmont has done, for they express the strongest indignation at his conduct, but they are very sorry that he has so far outstripped them on the road to fortune. They would be very glad, without dishonouring themselves to do as he has done, to acquire the same rights to the favor of the Bourbons." He afterwards spoke of Marmont with vexation, but without bitterness. "I treated him," he said, "as if he were my own child. I have often had to defend him against his colleagues, who did not appreciate his intellectual advantages, and who, judging him only by what he appears on the field of battle, made no account of his military talents. I created him marshal and duke through personal affection and regard for the recollections of childhood, and, I may well say, that I reckoned on his fidelity. He is, perhaps, the only man whose desertion I was not prepared for; but vanity, weakness of mind, and ambition have misled him. The unhappy man does not know what awaits him; his name will be for ever dishonoured. Believe me, I have no longer a thought about myself—my career is finished, or, very nearly so. Besides, what desire could I now have to reign over hearts that have grown weary of me, and are eager to offer their allegiance to another? I think only of France, which it is frightful to leave in this state—clipped, crippled, after having had frontiers so vast! Oh, Caulaincourt, that

is the most poignant of the many humiliations heaped on my head! Oh! if these dolts had not abandoned me, I would have rebuilt the fabric of her greatness; for, be assured, the Allies, maintaining their actual position, having Paris behind them and me in front, would have been destroyed. Had they left Paris to escape the danger, they should never have entered it again. The very fact of their leaving the city, at my approach, would be in itself a signal defeat. That unfortunate Marmont has frustrated this glorious result. Ah, Caulaincourt, what joy it would have been to restore the greatness of France in a few hours! Now, what is to be done? I would have about 150,000 men, with those I have here, and the troops Eugene, Augereau, Suchet, and Soult could bring; but I would be obliged to retire behind the Loire, entice the enemy to follow, and thus extend indefinitely the ravages to which France has been too long exposed, and try the fidelity of many, who, perhaps, would not bear the test better than Marmont,—and I should make all these efforts to prolong a reign, which, I clearly see, is drawing to a close. I do not feel sufficient energy to make such efforts. Undoubtedly, in prolonging the war, we should find means of improving our position. I am informed, on all sides, that the peasants of Lorraine, Champagne, and Burgundy, cut down isolated parties of the enemy. Within a short time the people will conceive a horror of the enemy; the Parisians will tire of Alexander's magnanimity. This prince is gracious in his manner,—he pleases women; but so much graciousness in a conqueror soon becomes revolting to the national pride of the conquered. Moreover, the Bourbons are coming, and who can foresee the consequences. To-day they reconcile France with Europe; but to-morrow in what state will she be in relation to herself? They represent external peace, but internal war. You will see what they will have done with the country in a year. They will not keep Talleyrand six months. There would be many chances of success in a prolonged struggle,—chances both political and military,—but at the price of fearful calamities. Besides, at this moment, something more is needed than myself. My name, my statue, my sword, all cause alarm. I must yield. I am going to recall the marshals, and you will see their delight, when I extricate them from their difficulties, and authorize them to do as Marmont has done, without compromising their honour."

This entire detachment from things, this indulgence towards individuals, resulted from the greatness of his mind, and was commensurate with the vastness of his errors. If his hard-working lieutenants were at length fatigued, it was because he had urged them to the verge of human capability, and was not able to estimate the exact measure of ordinary men or things. It was not they only who were fatigued, for so was the world at large, and their defection was a result of the nature of things. But after the commission of great faults, it becomes a mighty genius to acknowledge them, and

this sentiment inspires an ennobling sense of justice and that loftiness of language that gives dignity to misfortune.

Napoleon spoke afterwards of the fate that awaited himself. He accepted the isle of Elba, and in everything that concerned himself personally was very easy to please. "You know," he said to M. de Caulaincourt, "that I do not want anything. I had saved 150 millions out of my civil list which belongs to me, as justly as the savings a clerk makes out of his salary, belong to him. I have given everything to the army and I do not regret it. Let my family have a proper maintenance and I shall be content. As to my son, he will be an archduke, which will, perhaps, be better for him than the throne of France. Did he ascend that, would he be able to keep it? But I would wish Tuscany for him and his mother. They would be thus placed in the neighbourhood of the isle of Elba, and I should have the means of seeing them."

M. de Caulaincourt replied that the King of Rome would never obtain such a dotation, and that, thanks to Alexander, he would at most get Parma. "What," exclaimed Napoleon, "in exchange for the empire of France, not even Tuscany!" He submitted to the repeated affirmations of M. de Caulaincourt. After his son, he spoke of the Empress Josephine, of Prince Eugene, of Queen Hortense, and insisted that a proper provision should be made for them. "But," he said, to M. de Caulaincourt, "these things will be easily arranged; the Allies would not be so mean as to dispute them. But the army, but France, it is about them especially I ought to think. Since I give up the throne, and that I do more, that I sheathe my sword, having still so many opportunities of using it, have I not a right to demand some compensation? Would not the Allies extend the French frontiers, since this increase of strength to France would not be vested in my hands, but in those of the Bourbons? Could we not stipulate for the army, the maintenance of its privileges, such as grades, titles, dotations? Could we not, which would be so gratifying to the soldiers, conserve for them those three colours, which they have carried with so much glory to every part of the civilized world? Since we yield without fighting, when it would be so easy for us to shed more blood, is something not due to us, especially as I, the sole object of the enemy's hate and fear, would not profit by the concession?

And expatiating on this theme, which lay so near his heart, Napoleon wished to make some stipulations for France and the army. M. de Caulaincourt tried to disabuse his mind on these subjects, pointing out to him that he would no longer be allowed to treat of these great and important interests; that the great principle being accepted, that of his deposition, the privilege of representing France and negotiating for her was transferred to the Provisional Government, and that what he said on the subject would not be listened to. "But," added Napoleon, "what strength

has this Provisional Government, except what it receives from me, except what I give it by remaining here at Fontainebleau; with the *débris* of the army? When I shall have yielded, and the army with me, it will be powerless, it will command still less consideration than at present, and will be obliged to surrender at discretion."

Such was, in fact, the situation of affairs, it could not be better described; but he who deplored the public woe was himself the author of these calamities, and ought to submit like the rest of the world. M. de Caulaincourt did all in his power to make the Emperor comprehend this, and persisted in bringing him back to what alone could henceforth concern him, that is to say, his personal interest and that of his family. The former master of the world, becoming impatient, exclaimed, "You wish, then, to bring me down to a discussion of these miserable pecuniary interests! It is unworthy of me. Do you arrange my family affairs, Caulaincourt. As to me, I do not want anything; let me have the pension of a retired officer, it will be enough!"

After these conversations, which occupied the night and morning of the 6th of April; after drawing up the definite act of abdication, on which he bestowed considerable care, Napoleon recalled the marshals, to acquaint them with his ultimate resolves. Being admitted to his presence, and not knowing to what determination he had come, they renewed their complaints; they repeated that the army was exhausted, that there was no more blood left to spill, so much had been already shed. The marshals were so eager to obtain a sanction to their offering their services to the new government, that, had they met opposition, they might in the end have forgotten, for the first time, the respect due to Napoleon. But after having, through a kind of mischievous enjoyment, left them some moments in doubt, Napoleon said to them, "Gentlemen, make your mind easy, neither you nor the army will be called on to shed more blood; I consent to abdicate unconditionally. I would have wished, for your sakes as well as for the sake of my family, to secure the succession of the throne for my son. I believe such an event would have been still more profitable to you than to me, for you would have lived under a government, consonant to your origin, to your opinions, and to your interests. This was possible, but a disgraceful desertion has deprived you of a position that I hoped to secure you; but for the defection of the sixth corps, we might have done that, and more, we might have restored the fortunes of France. The event has been otherwise. I submit to my fate, do you submit to yours; resign yourselves to live under the Bourbons, and serve them faithfully. You have wished for repose, you shall have it; but, alas!—God grant that my presentiments deceive me—we are not a generation made for repose; the peace that you so much desire will cut down more of you on your beds of down, than war would have done in our bivouacs." After pronouncing these words, in a sad and impressive

manner, Napoleon read the act of his abdication, couched in these terms :—

"The Allied Powers, having proclaimed that the Emperor Napoleon was the only obstacle to the re-establishment of peace in Europe, the Emperor Napoleon, faithful to his oath, declares that he renounces, for himself and his heirs, the thrones of France and Italy, because there is no sacrifice, even that of life which he is not ready to make for the interests of France."

After hearing this document read, Napoleon's lieutenants rushed forward, seized his hands, and thanked him for the sacrifice he had made, and repeated what they had already said, touching his conditional abdication, that, in descending after such a fashion from the throne, he showed himself greater than ever. He allowed their secret joy to find vent in these last flatteries, and permitted them to speak on, for he did not wish to demean either them or himself by contemptible recriminations. Besides, who had made them what they were? He alone, by the despotism that had destroyed their individuality, by the interminable wars that had exhausted their strength; he had therefore no right to complain, and he acted nobly in recognizing the inevitable consequences of his errors, and submitting without an outburst of feeling, alike disagreeable to all parties.

It was then agreed that M. de Caulaincourt, accompanied as before by the Marshals Macdonald and Ney, should go to Paris, and lay before Alexander the definite act of abdication, an act of which he was to be the sole depository, and which he was to exchange for the treaty that was to secure the imperial family a suitable provision. Napoleon insisted once more that no efforts should be made, if such were needed, to ensure success, excepting for what concerned his son and his relatives. He dismissed the marshals, and affectionately pressed the hand of M. de Caulaincourt, who enjoyed the largest share of his confidence.

No sooner was this intelligence circulated at Fontainebleau, than a deep sadness was visible on the faces of the old soldiers. Amongst the officers of high rank, on the contrary, a feeling of immense relief was the prevailing sentiment. They could now, without qualms of conscience, quit the old master for the new. The greater number of the marshals were already considering the best mode of sending in their adhesion to the Provisional Government. They would willingly have confided the task to M. de Caulaincourt, if his immeasurable superiority had not prohibited the idea of his accepting such a confidence. But their anxiety had nearly reached its term, and within twenty-four hours acts of adhesion were to be seen in abundance, with signatures capable of putting the most scrupulous at their ease.

M. de Caulaincourt and the two Marshals set out immediately for Paris, where they arrived at a late hour on the 6th. At mid-

night they were admitted to the Emperor of Russia, who awaited their coming with extreme impatience, an impatience shared by the Provisional Government and its numerous adherents. Though the defection of the 6th corps had greatly diminished the fears that Napoleon still inspired, and though the assurances given by Marshal Ney and the greater number of the military personages with whom the Royalists were in correspondence, left little doubt as to the speedy adhesion of the army, they were still terrified in thinking of what might be attempted by the infernal spirit, as they called him, that had retired to Fontainebleau, and whom they honoured by the fear they felt, even whilst seeking to dishonour him by an accumulation of unheard-of insults. There was a kind of general joy when Marshal Ney said to the most eager among the frequenters of the Hôtel Saint-Florentin, that they might make their minds easy, for the act of unconditional abdication had arrived. When Napoleon's envoys appeared before the Emperor Alexander, this prince who, on former occasions, always shook hands with M. de Caulaincourt first, now ran to Marshal Ney, to thank him for what he had done, and tell him that of all the services he had rendered to his country, the last would not be esteemed the least valuable. The Russian monarch alluded to the letter of the previous evening, in which Marshal Ney boasted of having forced Napoleon to abdicate, and promised to be the bearer of the formal act. M. de Caulaincourt and Marshal Macdonald, ignorant of the existence of this letter, and not having seen anything that could induce them to consider Marshal Ney as the author of Napoleon's last resolves, were very much surprised, and testified their astonishment to Marshal Ney, who became embarrassed. Alexander did not delay to express to the two other negotiators the thanks he had at first, exclusively, addressed to Marshal Ney, and having learned on what conditions they would deliver the important document of which they were the depositories, he made no objection. As to the Isle of Elba, however, he declared he would keep his word, because he considered himself pledged by what he had said to M. de Caulaincourt; but his allies considered the concession imprudent, and blamed it openly; but he was determined it should be so, as he had promised; that touching the King of Rome and Maria Louisa, a principality in Italy was the least they could get, and the Emperor of Austria was about to recover so much territory in that country, that he certainly would not higgle with his own daughter; that as to Napoleon's brothers, his first wife, and his adopted children, Prince Eugene and Queen Hortense, they should obtain a suitable provision, for which he would become personally responsible; that his minister, M. de Nesselrode, would, if necessary, advocate the interests of the Bonaparte family; that they could refer to this minister for the details, but might, in case of any difficulty arising, apply to himself (Alexander). In dismissing the negotiators, the Emperor of Russia detained M. de

Caulaincourt, and explained himself more frankly with this noble-minded man, whom he always treated as a friend, and acknowledged to him that the intelligence he had just received of the insurrection of the French peasants, without alarming, disturbed him, for these peasants had massacred a numerous Russian detachment in the Vosges. He afterwards dwelt, with deep commiseration, on the desertions that were so numerous amongst Napoleon's followers, and recommended that no time should be lost in arranging his personal concerns, for two feelings, he said, were at that time being rapidly developed—the baseness of those who had served under the Empire, and the extravagant exultation of the Royalist party. He spoke of the Bourbons and their friends with extraordinary frankness, exhibiting, at the same time, surprise, disgust, and ill-humour at what he witnessed on every side, and said, that after having had so much trouble in escaping from the warlike follies of Napoleon, the Allies would have considerable difficulty in protecting themselves from the reactionary follies of the Royalists. Alexander dismissed M. de Caulaincourt, promising his friendship for himself and his support in aiding Napoleon.

Even after the deposition was pronounced by the Senate, Napoleon at Fontainebleau still inspired a degree of fear that held the Royalists in check, and prevented them giving full vent to their feelings. The defection of the 6th corps, which rendered Napoleon completely powerless, had considerably tranquillized them; but on learning his unconditional abdication, that is to say, the sheathing by his own act, of his terrible sword, they no longer felt any measure in the expression of their sentiments. That they should be, after so many sufferings, so much bloodshed and so many disasters, public and private, delighted to see again the princes under whom they had been young, rich, powerful and happy, was quite natural and legitimate. That to their joy they should add all the fury of triumphant hate, was, alas! perfectly natural, though sadly derogatory to the dignity of France. Never was there witnessed in any country, a greater outburst of long-restrained rage, than was now displayed, and it must be confessed that the partizans of the ancient dynasty, especially known as Royalists, were not the sole execrators of the deposed Emperor. Fathers and mothers of families who had hitherto cursed in secret a war that devoured their children, now feeling themselves free to give vent to their sentiments, called Napoleon the most atrocious names. Nero had not been more execrated in ancient nor Robespierre in modern times. He was now generally called, "The Corsican Ogre." He was represented as a monster occupied in destroying whole generations, to glut a devouring passion for war. A document secretly prepared by M. de Chateaubriand, during the last hours of the empire, and published under the protection of foreign bayonets, was the correct expression of this overflow of unparalleled hate. In this production, it would seem that passion had stirred up the dregs

of the bad taste, too frequently discernible in the writer's style: M. de Chateaubriand attributed to Napoleon every vice, every meanness, every crime. The production was read with incredible avidity at Paris, and from Paris it passed into the provinces, always excepting those into which the enemy had penetrated. Strange contrast! the provinces that had suffered most from Napoleon's errors, were less adverse to him than the others, for the former pertinaciously regarded him as the defender of their native land. Everywhere else, the public anger went on increasing, like an angry man who becomes still more angry as he continues to scold, so the public mind appeared to become intoxicated by its own fury. The murder of the Duke of Enghien, that had been so long consigned to silence, the perfidious meeting at Bayonne, where the Spanish princes had been deceived, were made subject-matter of the darkest narratives, as if the truth, which was bad enough, needed the heightening of calumny. The return from Egypt, the retreat from Russia, were talked of as cowardly desertions of the betrayed French army. Napoleon, it was said, had only made one campaign that was really brilliant. There were, in his long military career, only a few successful events, obtained by force of arms. The art of war, degraded in his hands, had become a mere butchery. His government, hitherto so admired, was now talked of as a horrible fiscal system, designed to extract the last crown from the pocket of his last subject. The immortal campaign of 1814 was only a succession of desperate acts inspired by despair. An order given by the artillery, in the battle of 30th March, without Napoleon's sanction, who was then 80 leagues from Paris, ordering the destruction of the munitions at Grenelle that they might not fall into the enemy's hands, was regarded as a design to blow up the capital. An officer, willing to flatter the dominant passions of the day, declared that he had refused to execute this fearful order. The monster, it was said, had wished to destroy Paris, like a corsair who wishes to blow up his vessel, only with this difference that he was not on board. As to the rest, it was added that he was not a Frenchman, which ought to be a matter of congratulation for the honour of France. He had changed his name from *Buonaparte* to *Bonaparte*, but he ought to be called Buonaparte. Even the name, Napoleon, did not belong to him. Napoleon was an imaginary saint: it was *Nicholas* that ought to be joined to his family name. This monster, it was said, this enemy of mankind, was an infidel. Whilst that at his chapel or Nôtre Dame, he attended mass, in private with Monge, Volney and others, he professed atheism. He was hard-hearted, coarse, beat his generals, insulted women, and in his military capacity no better than a coward. "And France," his enemies exclaimed, "France had submitted to this man." Such an aberration of intellect could only be explained by the political blindness that succeeds revolutions! This outpouring of words was accompanied by acts of the same character. Napoleon's statue, to which a rope had been uselessly fastened for the purpose of pulling it down, the day

the Allies entered Paris, was assailed some days after, with the aid of machinery and taken down from the Austerlitz column and placed in a government store, and public hate gazing on the monument had the satisfaction of seeing the summit bare.

Such was the fierce explosion of anger to which, by a terrible reaction in sublunary things, Napoleon was exposed; he who during twenty years had been so servilely flattered, he whose deeds had excited the admiration of the astonished world. But he was too great not to remain unmoved by such indignities, whilst he was at the same time conscious that his own acts had produced this revulsion of public feeling. And the flatteries lavished at the same time on the allied sovereigns made the picture of humanity still more pitiable. Alexander, undoubtedly, by his own conduct and the example he gave his allies, deserved the thanks of the French people. But if ingratitude cannot be sanctioned under any circumstances, gratitude ought to be measured in expression when addressed to the conquerors of our native land. Yet it was not so, and the Royalists went so far as to say that the allied sovereigns, who had suffered so much from the French, displayed great magnanimity in taking so gentle a vengeance. The flames of Moscow were every day recalled, not by Russian, but by French, writers. They were not content with praising Marshal Blucher and General Sacken, brave men, whose praise was natural and well-deserved from Prussian and Russian lips; but these writers sought out a French emigrant, General Langeron, who served in the army of the Czar, and related with complacency how he had distinguished himself in the attack on Montmartre, and with what well-merited rewards he had been loaded by the Russian monarch. Thus, amonst the many changes of our great and terrible revolution, patriotism, like liberty, was doomed to reverses; and, just as liberty, the idol of every heart in 1789 became in 1793 the object of universal execration, in like manner patriotism had now fallen into such disrepute, that the act of bearing arms against the natal soil, an act condemned in every age, now met laudation. Weary days of reaction, when the public mind, losing its primary notions of right and wrong, rejects what it had adored and adores what it had rejected, and esteems the most shameful contradiction a happy reconversion to truth.

It naturally followed that if Napoleon were a monster from whose grasp France ought to be torn, the Bourbons were accomplished princes, to whom it ought to be restored as soon as possible, as their legitimate property. France had not quite forgotten them; for twenty years were not sufficient to consign to oblivion an illustrious family that had reigned with glory during centuries; but the present generation was entirely ignorant how and in what degree they were related to the unfortunate king who died on the scaffold, and the not less unfortunate child that died in custody of a cobbler. The populace asked each other if these were the sons, brothers, or

cousins of those unfortunate princes, for, with the exception of a few aged persons, the populace knew nothing of the matter. Flattery, quick to turn from him who was now called the deposed tyrant, to those who were designated saving angels, attributed to the latter every virtue, and they certainly possessed some that deserved to be extolled in language more refined and classical than that in which their praises were sung. It was told that Louis XVI. had left a brother, Louis Stanislaus Xavier, now destined to succeed him, under the name of Louis XVIII.; that he was a savant, a literary man, and a philosopher; that he had left another brother, the Count d'Artois, a model of French goodness and elegance; and nephews, the Dukes of Angoulême and Berry, types of ancient chivalrous honour. Under these princes, gentle and just, having preserved the virtues that a fearful revolution had almost driven from earth, France, beloved and respected by Europe, would find repose and bequeath it to the world. She would find peace, which she had never met amid the orgies of demagogry, and which would be now presented to her by princes, formed during twenty years in the English school. There was, incontestably, some truth in this flattery, and all might have turned to an enduring good, had not party spirit perverted these many promising elements of prosperity and peace.

Be this as it may, independent of their merit, the Bourbons had in their favour the law of necessity. In fact, the republic, still all stained with the blood shed in 1793, not being presentable to terrified France, royalty alone was mentionable; and of the two forms then existing, that of genius and that of tradition, the former was rendered unacceptable by its own wild extravagances, and what remained but the latter, with memories hallowed by time and renovated by misfortune? It was therefore very natural that, some days having been employed in recalling the Bourbons to the public mind, the people rallied round them with an hourly increasing enthusiasm.

Two things were needed to be done expeditiously; to draw up a constitution that would impose conditions on the Bourbons in recalling them, and meanwhile receive the Count d'Artois at Paris. The Count d'Artois had remained concealed at Nancy, as we have seen, awaiting the return of M. de Vitrolles, who had come to make arrangements with the Provisional Government, and who did not wish to return to the prince, until the question of Maria Louisa's regency was settled. This regency having been irrevocably rejected, and the recall of the Bourbons being the only imaginable solution of the political difficulty, it became necessary to send M. de Vitrolles to Nancy to see the prince. M. de Talleyrand and the members of the Provisional Government, spite of M. de Vitrolles' importunities, instructed him to tell the Count d'Artois that he would be received at the gates of Paris with all the honours due to his rank; that he

would be conducted to Nôtre Dame to hear a *Te Deum* chanted, and from Nôtre Dame to the Tuilleries; that he should enter the city dressed in the uniform of the National Guards; that it was even desirable that he should wear the tricolor cockade, for this would be a sure means of gaining the affections of the army; that such was the opinion of those enlightened men, whose concurrence was indispensably necessary for carrying out his views; that the power attributed to him would be that of the representative of Louis XVIII., of whose letters patent he was the bearer; that these letters would be submitted to the Senate, who, basing their conduct on them, would bestow on the prince the title of Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom, implying, of course, an adhesion to the conditions of the new constitution.

M. de Vitrolles, under the inspiration of the sentiments that animated the old royalist party, exclaimed loudly against the tricolor cockade, white being in his opinion the colour of the ancient dynasty, and the emblem of the Bourbons' inalienable right; he was also indignant at the pretension of the Senate to invest the Count d'Artois with royal power; and, above all, at the idea of imposing a constitution on the legitimate sovereign. M. de Talleyrand, not wishing to enter into a discussion, and trusting that time would settle all things, said rather carelessly to M. de Vitrolles, that it was better to set off without delay, and find the prince; that at the moment of his entrance the difficulty of the cockade could be settled; that, touching the constitution, it was indispensable that one should be framed, but it would be rendered as little irksome as possible, and the framers would especially endeavour to avoid the appearance of imposing a law. M. de Talleyrand repeated to M. de Vitrolles, in a word, that it was better to set off, and not impede, by puerile objections, the progress of events. He commissioned him, at the same time, to carry to the prince the assurance of his absolute personal devotedness.

In order to convince M. de Vitrolles that he could not do better than depart, with these conditions, an audience with the Emperor Alexander was procured him. During this audience, M. de Vitrolles having attempted with the arrogance of the victorious party, to plead for the ancient colours and unconditional liberty for the King of France, the Emperor Alexander, laying aside his habitual gentleness, told him, the allied sovereigns had not crossed the Rhine with four hundred thousand men to make France the slave of emigration; that without pretending to impose a government on France, they would be guided by the opinion of the actual and sole acknowledged and admissible authority—the Senate— that having used this body to dethrone Napoleon, they would not repay the service with ingratitude, by dethroning the Senate; that moreover the authority of the Senate was in their eyes the only safe, the only enlightened authority existing in France, and that it

was this body alone that could imprint on any public act, a character at once legal and national; that besides, the power that had burst open the gates of Paris, was still within its walls, that this power represented all Europe, so it was better to submit and not force the Allies to regret that they had pledged themselves so deeply in favour of the Bourbons.

M. de Vitrolles would have been tempted to contradict, for he now regarded as detestable the foreign influence that he had himself gone to Troyes to solicit, but which he found intolerable when made the vehicle of good advice. However, there was no reply to be made, and M. de Vitrolles set out, the bearer of conditions imposed by the Provisional Government, resolving with his friends, to curtail them as much as possible in the execution.

The most urgent business was to draw up the constitution. It was necessary to use despatch, in the first place, to render Napoleon's deposition definite, by appointing the Bourbons his successors, secondly, to bind the Bourbons themselves in their recall, by imposing on them the principles of 1789. This two-fold idea, of recalling the Bourbons and restricting them by wise laws, had been propagated by M. de Talleyrand, and had gradually taken possession of the public mind. According to the original project, it was the Provisional Government that was to draw up the plan of a constitution. To accomplish the task, M. de Talleyrand had wished to obtain the assistance of the most enlightened and influential members of the Senate, and for that purpose had assembled them at his house. At the very first words uttered on this important subject, the most contradictory ideas were enunciated, those ideas that were dominant in 1791, and entailed so much public confusion. In fact, the political education of France, successively interrupted by the Reign of Terror and the Empire, had been, so to speak, suspended, and the prevailing ideas now were those of the *Assemblée Constituante*, moderated, certainly, by existing circumstances. M. de Talleyrand, who hated disputation, resolved to let the senators do as they pleased, recommending them three things: to be expeditious, to restrict the Bourbons in recalling them, and to make the restriction efficacious, he advised that the Senate should be interwoven in the new constitution under the title of "Upper Chamber of the Restored Monarchy." He thus sought to please the Senate, of which he had need, and render that body an obstacle to emigration. After giving this advice, M. de Talleyrand abandoned the work, and there only remained of the members of the Provisional Government, the Abbé Montesquiou, a haughty and persevering debater, constantly demanding what conditions were to be imposed on the Bourbons, of whom he was the secret and devoted agent.

The discussions between the Abbé Montesquiou and the Senators commissioned to draw up the constitution were very animated. The points of dispute were the following. The Senate wished, in

the first place, that Louis XVIII, the brother of the unfortunate Louis XVI, and his heir, since the death of the august orphan, who was imprisoned in the temple—should be recalled by the *free-will of the people*, and invested with the insignia of royalty, after having sworn to observe the new constitution. The nation applied to this prince, unquestionably because of his royal origin, whose hereditary value they recognized, but the people sought him *freely*, and accepted him *on condition*, and in virtue of the right the nation had to choose a ruler. The Senate wished to conciliate both claims, that of the ancient royalty, and that of the nation, by acknowledging both claims, and binding them by a reciprocal contract. This point, after a warm discussion, being decided, next came the question of the form of government, upon which, happily, there was no dispute, even amongst those the most opposed upon other matters. Thus an inviolable king was immediately admitted who was to be the sole depository of the executive power, exercising it through responsible ministers, sharing the legislative power with two chambers, the one aristocratic, the other democratic. There were some differences of opinion as to the details of carrying out this system. Those persons who were deeply imbued with the prejudices of the *constituante* wished that the two chambers should enjoy the privilege of taking the initiative in framing the laws, the right being secured to the king of affixing his sanction, a right which no person thought of contesting. The French had not, at that epoch, learned by experience that, under this form of government, the most important point for the chambers is to obtain, by constitutional means, ministers of their own choice. These ministers, once appointed, pass laws the most agreeable to the majority, for, otherwise, ministers, constrained to pass and execute laws that do not emanate from themselves, would be either the most awkward or the most insincere of legislative administrators. For want of experience, or, to speak more correctly, under the influence of a too recent and sad experience, these debates spoke of depriving the king of the prerogative of making peace and war, forgetting that all these prerogatives which they claimed for the chambers are, more properly, combined into one, that of deposing or appointing ministers who, being elected by the majority, would make, as the majority pleased, either peace or war. Another subject that excited lengthened discussions was the formation of the two chambers. The second, called the "lower house," by the English, who are too proud not to attach importance to things, not to words, provoked no discussion. Instead of having the members appointed by the Senate, from the candidates presented by the electoral bodies, as was done under the Empire, it was agreed that the Second Chamber should be directly chosen by the electoral colleges, investing the actual administration with the duty of organizing these colleges. The most serious debate arose on the subject of the upper chamber. M. de Talleyrand and his *collaborateurs* were

desirous that, under the restored monarchy of the Bourbons, the chief power should be invested in the Senate, which was composed of the most illustrious men of the Revolution and the Empire. It would certainly have been a most desirable measure, for the members of the Senate were so long accustomed to submit, that they would not have been importunate to royalty and, at the same time, too deeply imbued with the sentiments of the French Revolution, not to oppose an invincible obstacle to emigration. In this manner M. de Talleyrand encouraged the senators to fix themselves solidly in the new constitution by declaring themselves hereditary peers. In this the Emperor Alexander fully agreed with him, for this generous-minded and enthusiastic prince, being accompanied by his former tutor, M. de Laharpe, and brought by him into contact with the most liberal of the senators, entered fully into their ideas, and shrank from placing France under the yoke of emigration, after having freed her from the yoke of the Empire; he wished to make use of the Senate alone, either in dethroning Napoleon, or binding the Bourbons by constitutional laws in recalling them.

Encouraged in these tendencies by sincere conviction, by their own interests, and by the approval of high personages, the senators were determined not to stop at half measures. They wished that the entire Senate should constitute the Upper Chamber under the Bourbons, and in order that this chamber should not be inundated by numerous promotions of emigrant peers, they wished to limit the members of the chamber to the actual number of the senators, and only grant the King the prerogative of filling up the vacancies, a very limited prerogative where the principle of a hereditary peerage was admitted. To these political advantages, the senators intended to add some of a pecuniary nature, by converting into real property the funds out of which their salaries were paid, the entire to be equally divided betweeen the actual senators. As to the rest, not wishing to seem exclusively occupied with themselves, the senators wished the existing legislative corps should compose the Lower Chamber under the monarchy, until a new election should take place.

There were many points on which not one dissentient voice was heard; the vote for supplies and taxation by the chambers, equality of justice for all ranks, permanency of the magisterial office, individual liberty, religious liberty, liberty of the press, under a certain limited censorship, eligibility of all Frenchmen to public employments, the continuance of ranks and pensions in the army, the conservation of the Legion of Honour, a recognition of the new nobility, and re-establishment of the old, an inviolable respect for the public debt, an irrevocable sanction of sales of what was called "national property," and lastly, an act of oblivion, including all persons, who by word or deed had taken a part in public affairs since 1789; from this moment, all parties were agreed, with the exception of some slight details as to the form of the monarchy de-

signated as *constitutional*, and which consisted of an inviolable hereditary king, represented by responsible ministers, with two chambers, representing different social classes, and furnished with means of bending the ministers to their will; a monarchy which is neither English nor French nor German, but of all times and countries, for it is the only possible monarchical form that remains, after an absolute monarchy is rejected.

Generally speaking, the mass of the Royalists, intoxicated with joy at the idea of again beholding the Bourbons, thought little of constitutional questions. Provided they could obtain a king such as they knew in former times, they were satisfied. In fact, they would have preferred to see the king absolute as in former times, than surrounded by revolutionary trammels, but they were satisfied to have their king on any terms, as with him they felt confident of recovering the happiness they enjoyed in olden times. However, some persons, either more thoughtful or more subtle, having systematized their prejudices, wished that the king should return *free*, and declared they would not receive him if he were shackled by conditions. Of the latter, the Abbé Montesquiou was one of the most zealous. In his opinion, and the opinion of the rest of his party, the king was sole sovereign, and the pretended sovereignty of the people was only a revolutionary impertinence. Undoubtedly the king, whose eyes were not closed against the light, might, from time to time, say every century or half century, perceive that abuses existed, and reform them, but of his own free authority, by granting reformatory measures, which might even go so far as to modify the forms of government, but never abrogate the principle of an absolute royal authority. Such were the only concessions that these high class royalists would make; but to impose conditions on the royal authority, an authority of divine origin, emanating from God, not from men, binding the king by an oath, and only restoring the crown on such conditions to its legitimate possessor would be, in their opinion, so many acts of rebellion and insurrection.

M. de Talleyrand, having little time and less inclination to occupy himself with questions of this kind, besides confiding to the Senate the care of restraining the Bourbons, he left M. de Montesquiou to dispute with the senators, commissioned to draw up the new constitution. This abbé, though a philosopher and a politician, could not restrain his anger when the principle of national sovereignty was enunciated in his presence. However, he was not so besotted as to advocate openly the opposite principle, or suppose it would ever obtain the ascendant, for it would be easier to turn back our planet in its orbit, than induce old revolutionists to recognise the king as sole sovereign and the nation as subject, with no other right than that of being well treated by him, in the same way as the lower animals have a right not to be overworked by man. But, whilst getting angry and exclaiming against this and against that, M. de Montesquiou dared not attack the

main difficulty and contest the principle of a contract existing between the monarch and the people. But he took advantage of the opportunity afforded by the Senate, who had given themselves so conspicuous a place in the future constitution; on this subject he was violent, and almost insulting. "And what are you," he said to the senators, "to assume such authority, both with regard to the nation and the king? And first, with regard to the nation, what title have you but what is derived from a constitution that you have just overturned, or a confidence of which the nation has as yet given no evidence, and which possibly it does not feel in you? As to the king, he does not know you; he is my sovereign and yours; he returns by the instrumentality of providential decrees, of which neither you nor I am the author, and will not submit to any condition imposed by you. To limit the number of peers! To give the king only the prerogative of filling the vacancies! But this is violating the principles of constitutional monarchy, such as they are understood in England, the country where they are best known; it would be making the peerage an omnipotent oligarchy, against which the king would be powerless for two reasons: because he could not dissolve the Upper as he could the Lower Chamber, nor could he create peers, the number being already limited. The peerage will be, in fact, an absolute monarch, and you would yourselves constitute this peerage. You would recall the king only to make him serve as a veil to your own power."

It must be acknowledged that on this last point, the Abbé Montesquiou was right, because limiting the number of peers was, in fact, to render the peerage absolute. But he was offensive, even impertinent, and seemed to tell the senators that they might retain their pensions and some of them their seats, but that was all that could be done, for a body of revolutionists who no longer possessed the popular favour, who would never obtain the royal confidence, and who had thrown away their sole support, in breaking Napoleon's power.

The senators might have replied that they represented neither the king nor the nation, who at the actual time had no representatives, but that with all their faults and weaknesses, they represented something very important--the French Revolution; that they were the faithful depositories of its principles; that this constituted an immense moral force, to which they united an actual force equally incontestible; that of being the only authority recognised, especially by the all-powerful foreigners then at Paris; that they held the crown in their hands, and would bestow it *conditionally*, but those who pretended to the crown, were expected to refuse it, if the conditions did not suit them.

Unfortunately amongst the senators, who were so tenacious of their opinions, though the energy of their character was broken down, there was not one capable of speaking energetically.

Instead of replying, they contented themselves with acting. Looking on M. de Montesquiou as an insolent spirit, the precursor of others still worse, they lost no time drawing up in writing the plan of the constitution as they had conceived it; in this they were encouraged by the secret approbation of M. de Talleyrand and the undisguised approval of the Emperor Alexander. We may as well add that these altercations reached their highest point on the 5th April, the very day that the marshals were pleading at Paris for the regency of Maria Louisa, and the representatives of royalty were in the greatest alarm. It would be evidently, an incalculable advantage to obtain, at such a moment, a proclamation of the Bourbons by the Senate, no matter on what conditions. "Let us put an end to it," said M. de Talleyrand to M. de Montesquiou, "let us obtain from the only recognised authority, the exclusion of the Bonapartes, and the recall of the Bourbons, and we shall afterwards endeavour, either to throw off what is disagreeable or submit to it." "Put an end to it," he said, also to the senators, "proclaim the Bourbons, for Bonaparte will make you pay dearly for your acts of the 1st and 2nd of April. Proclaim the Bourbons and impose on them what conditions you please. If these conditions do not suit them, they will refuse the crown, but you need not fear that. They will accept the crown on any conditions, and we shall be delivered from the power of the madman at Fontainebleau." These counsels, which rather palliated than removed the difficulty, pointed out however a means of extrication from the existing embarrassment. The Senate followed M. de Talleyrand's advice, and the next day—the 6th—whilst the marshals were returning to Fontainebleau to demand the Emperor's unconditional abdication, the Senate voted the acceptance of the constitution, based on the conditions we have quoted.

The Senate declared in the act of constitution that they *recalled to the throne of their own free-will,* under the title of KING OF THE FRENCH, Louis Stanislas Xavier, brother of Louis XVI, and conferred upon him the hereditary royalty, with which the prince was not to be invested until he should have sworn to observe faithfully the new constitution. There were now established an inviolable King, responsible ministers, two Chambers, one hereditary, the other elective; the hereditary Chamber was composed of the Senate, whose number was limited to two hundred members, this left the King fifty nominations; the existing legislative corps, composed the elective Chamber, until new elections; their dotations were secured to the members of the Senate, and their salaries to those of the legislative corps; the executive power was invested exclusively in the King, including the prerogative of making peace and war; the legislative power was to be exercised conjointly by the King and the two Chambers; there was to be a permanent magistracy; religious liberty, individual liberty, and the liberty of the

press were to be recognized principles; the Legion of Honor was to be maintained, the two *noblesse*, the privileges enjoyed by the army, the public debt was to be respected, and what was called national sales, and lastly an act of oblivion for all acts and votes prior to, &c., &c.

These conditions, drawn up in terms simple, clear and sufficiently general to allow many after alterations, were voted on the evening of the 6th. On the 7th, the constitution was printed, and on the 8th published in the different quarters of the capital. It must be acknowledged that it did not produce a favourable impression. The Senate ought to have been strongly supported in the present instance, for it was that body alone who could transfer the crown from Napoleon to the Bourbons, that body only who in the transfer had any title to represent the nation, and obtain favourable conditions for her, but, the Senate, that for so many reasons ought to have been supported, was neither esteemed nor loved by anybody. The Bonapartists reproached the Senate with having lifted a parricidal hand against their founder; the friends of liberty, scarcely awakened from a long sleep, saw in the Senate only the servile instrument of an insupportable despotism; lastly, the systematic Royalists, considering that body as the representative of the Revolution and the Empire, were indignant that the senators, degraded as they were, should dare to dictate conditions to the legitimate King; and such conditions! conditions borrowed from a detested revolution. This was in the eyes of the Royalists, an act of rebellion, of impudence, and unheard-of effrontery. To oppose the Senate, they had recourse to the simplest means—those adopted by M. de Montesquiou; they attacked the Senate in its weak point, and exclaimed, as did the entire public, against the solicitude displayed by the Senate in guarding their own interests, by securing the perpetuity of their own incomes. The press took up the cry, not in the form of newspapers but of pamphlets, which were the fashion of the day, and endless reprobation and bitter pleasantries were poured out against the *conservative* senators who, of all they had undertaken to conserve, had only succeeded in taking care of their own incomes. Convicted avarice is one of those vices against which it is most easy to excite public laughter, for men generally condemn most loudly in others, the failings to which they are most subject themselves. Consequently, a universal, and contemptuous laugh was raised against the Senate. The public fell into the snare, and did not perceive that in mocking the Senate, they became themselves the partizans of emigration, whose evil consequences were at this time much more to be feared than the acts of the Senate. This was a misfortune, which temperate and enlightened men—always so rare in times of revolution—could alone appreciate. But the mass of the public, joining their voice to that of the Royalists, seemed to say to the senators: "Begone with the master that you knew neither how to restrain nor defend!"

The Royalists, who were not very expert in the trade of politics, for they had been long out of practice, endeavoured to play off the legislative corps against the senate, but without much success. The legislative corps, prorogued by Napoleon, on account of its recent manifestation, had not been legally convoked. But the question of legality presents little difficulty at a time when sovereigns are being dethroned, and the members of the legislative council assembled in full force, to play their part in the new revolution. Finding the first place already taken by the senate, who, of their own authority, had pronounced the deposition of Napoleon, and the recall of the Bourbons, and whom the foreign sovereigns recognized as the sole existing authority, the members of the legislative corps were obliged to play a secondary part, and follow the others; they were evidently jealous. Though they had not formerly shown more firmness that the Senate, and possessed still less intelligence, they enjoyed a certain amount of popularity in consideration of their mode of acting in the previous December, and the Royalists divining their jealousy, began to flatter for the purpose of making use of them. However, these intrigues could be of very little consequence. The legislative corps obliged to utter a few words of assent to the important resolutions that had just been adopted, might indeed hold a language somewhat different to that of the Senate, but was incapable of putting forth antagonistic resolutions, and the Bourbons were, consequently, to return, bound by the constitution of the 6th of April, or by one nearly similar; this was the important point.

M. de Caulaincourt, who had been especially charged to advocate the interests of Napoleon and his family, saw with grief the influx of adhesions that poured into Paris since the fact of the unconditional abdication had become known. Marshals Victor, Oudinot, Lefebvre, and a crowd of generals, had hastened to send in their allegiance to the Provisional Government. The Ministers of the Empire assembled round Maria Louisa at Blois, had, for the most part, done the same, and at their head was Prince High Chancellor Cambacérès. It was only the field-officers who were at a distance, Marshals Soult, Suchet, Augereau, Davout, and General Maison, commanding respectively the armies of Spain, Catalonia, Lyon, Westphalia, and Flanders, who did not speak out, for they had not had time. But the Provisional Government had despatched emissaries to summon them officially, and beg them earnestly to support the new order of things, pointing out, at the same time, the uselessness and danger of resistance; and, with the exception of Marshal Davout, the obstinacy of whose temper was well known, favourable replies were expressed from all of these, and it must be said that such expectations were well grounded, for Napoleon having once abdicated, what interest, public or private, could be alleged in favour of a prolonged resistance.

Each passing day, in giving fresh strength to the new government, rendered Napoleon weaker, and his representatives more

dependant on the negotiators with whom they had to treat. Alexander had, with a high sense of honour, warned M. de Caulaincourt of this, and advised him to hasten; "for," he said, "the most I shall be able to do, in exerting all my authority, will be to secure the fulfilment of what I have promised." In fact, Alexander's weakness in placing Napoleon so near the European continent, by granting him the island of Elba, was loudly condemned in the allied camp, and in the *salons* of the Provisional Government. There was one person in particular, the Duke d'Otranto, who, having had a mission to Murat during the last campaign, was in despair at being absent from Paris whilst a revolution was being effected, and thus allowing M. de Talleyrand to play the most conspicuous part. Less suited than the latter to negotiate with the European cabinets, he was much fitter to conduct intrigues with the different bodies of the State; and had he been at Paris, he would have acquired an influence almost equal to that of M. de Talleyrand. But, fated to play only the second part, he went, came, blamed, approved, advised, and exclaimed against the idea of according the isle of Elba to Napoleon, for whom he entertained as much hatred as fear. He called Alexander's generous imprudence folly, and by dint of talking he had excited a strong opposition against the conditions promised to the deposed Emperor. On the other hand, Austria was unwilling to grant a principality in Italy to Maria Louisa; it was even doubtful whether she would consent to accord Parma and Plaisance, but she absolutely refused Tuscany. In fact, even the Provisional Government entertained objections. This government did not wish to concede to Napoleon the honour of stipulating certain advantages for the army, such as the conservation of the tricolor cockade and the legion of honour, asserting that he had no longer any interest in such things; the Provisional Government also contested the pecuniary conditions, less on account of the expense to the Treasury than because these concessions implied a recognition of the imperial reign. But Alexander had declared his opinion decidedly, and even with a kind of anger, and gave his allies to understand that they were under sufficient obligations to him not to force him to break his word. He therefore wished for an immediate decision. But M. de Metternich had remained at Dijon with the Emperor of Austria, not caring to appear at Paris, whilst Maria Louisa was being dethroned; and Lord Castlereagh, not wishing to become responsible to the two English Houses for the recall of the Bourbons, which, however, he ardently desired, had delayed coming to Paris. The arrival of these two ministers was announced for the 10th, and it was impossible to conclude without them.

A slight incident was very near interrupting the negotiations, and giving events an entirely new course. If some of Napoleon's adherents exhibited hourly evidences of moral fear, the greater number became more warm at sight of the general weakness. The latter forgot that a few days before they too had participated in the

general feeling of weariness, and had cursed a hundred times the exorbitant ambition which had caused their blood to flow so often on the battle-field; they were now entirely impressed by the sight of the great man deserted and left almost alone at Fontainebleau. Some certainly thought bitterly of their career suddenly broken off, but all were heartily disgusted at Marmont's defection and the ingratitude that stained his conduct; they cried out against treason, and were ready to fall upon their chiefs, whom they accused of being the cause of the Emperor's forced abdication. In fact, a report was circulated that the marshals had used violence to oblige Napoleon to renounce the throne. To a suppositious fact were added false details, and many hot-headed partizans were not far from proceeding to actual violence, in retaliation for imaginary wrongs, which they took pleasure in recounting. When Napoleon appeared in the court of the Fontainebleau palace, many officers brandished their swords, and offered to sacrifice their lives for him. Deeply touched by such demonstrations, and calculating the forces that still remained to his lieutenants, Soult, Suchet, Augereau, Eugene, Maison, and Davout, he could not repress some feelings of regret, nor prevent their manifestation. Sympathising with this sentiment, young, generous, but thoughtless men, who experienced for him an increased enthusiasm, had, on the nights of the 7th and 8th, exhibited more than usual emotion. The old Chasseurs and Grenadiers of the Guard, who had remained at Fontainebleau, distinguished themselves especially on this occasion, they traversed the streets of the little town, crying out, "Long live the Emperor! down with the traitors!" They threatened to massacre those whom they qualified as traitors, and wildly demanded to be led on to Paris. However, after yielding a moment, Napoleon seeing in his cooler reason, that no great advantage could be drawn from such a movement, sent his most faithful servants to calm a fruitless ebullition of feeling. This burst of emotion was the last effort of a flame that was about to expire.

One of the officers who did not take part in these imprudent regrets and feared the consequences, had had the cowardice to inform the Allies, adding the falsehood that Napoleon had escaped from Fontainebleau, intending to put himself at the head of the armies of Italy, Catalonia, and Spain.* When this intelligence reached the head-quarters of the sovereigns, great alarm was excited. After the desertion of the sixth corps, which was involuntary on the part of the soldiers, individual desertions became frequent in the army, and there did not now remain to Napoleon more than 40,000 men. The idea of these 40,000, led on by him, and possibly sustained by the Parisians, caused an indescribable terror to the 200,000 allied troops that were at Paris, and who were about to be joined by 200,000 more; they knew no rest whilst they entertained a doubt on the subject. Alexander, with his character-

* M. de Caulaincourt, who knew the author of this treason, did not wish to entail on him the contempt of posterity, and forbore to record his name in his Memoirs.

istic mobility, passing suddenly from extreme confidence to extreme distrust, thought he had been deceived by Napoleon's representatives, and even forgetting M. de Caulaincourt's stainless honour, suspected that fidelity to his master had stifled his sincerity, and that he and the two marshals had come to Paris to hide a great military manœuvre. This suspicion might have had some foundation, when they first came to Paris a few days before, and had not pledged their word, but at the actual time it was an illusion, conjured up by fear. Alexander sent for the three plenipotentiaries, expressed his discontent, and even went so far as to say, that, had he followed his first impulse, and the advice of his allies, he would have had them arrested. M. de Caulaincourt haughtily rejected the suspicions cast upon him; he said that after the generous frankness the Russian monarch had displayed in treating with them, they would have scorned to become accomplices even in a *ruse de guerre*—he asserted that the allied sovereigns had been shamefully misled, and offered to become a prisoner, until the truth should be ascertained. Alexander did not accept this offer, and to prove that his suspicions had not been lightly conceived, he told M. de Caulaincourt the name of the informer. The latter was indignant, and it was instantly agreed that officers should be sent to Fontainebleau, to make enquiries. Some hours after, these officers returned with an exact report of what had passed. According to their report, the affair had consisted of a kind of military sedition, that had died out of itself, Napoleon not wishing to profit by it.

Here was an additional reason for hastening the *dénouement*. But this was not the sole cause, for every moment, reports were spread of the arrival of the Count d'Artois, and should this prince once enter Paris, received, as he would undoubtedly be, with the loud acclamations that ever welcome new arrivals, it might become impossible to obtain anything for Napoleon. Alexander had indeed promised not to admit the Count d'Artois into Paris before the conventions relative to the imperial family should be signed, and this was an additional reason for despatch. Matters were accordingly expedited. In the first place, it was thought unwise to live under a tacit armistice, which might, at any moment, be broken, without criminating any one. A formal armistice was therefore drawn up for all the armies, and particularly for that encamped round Fontainebleau. Touching the latter, it was agreed, that it should be separated from the allied troops by the Seine, from Fontainebleau to Essonne; from this place, the river of the same name should form a line of demarcation as far as the cantonments extended. This armistice signed, the arrangements for Napoleon and his family were proceeded with.

The cession of the isle of Elba, though more than once contested at the instigation of M. Fouché and the Austrian ministers, was not questioned, thanks to the decided opinion pronounced by Alexander. It was agreed that Napoleon should be sole sovereign of this island, and retain during his life, the title by which he was

known to the world—that of Emperor. It was also agreed that he should be accompanied by seven or eight hundred men of the Old Guard, who should serve both as an escort of honour, and a means of defence. The next question under consideration was a provision for Maria Louisa and her son. M. de Metternich had arrived the 10th April, and refused Tuscany, saying that Alexander's willingness to give up that province, was only being generous at the expense of others. Parma and Plaisance were assigned to the mother and son. Next came the pecuniary arrangements. Napoleon was to have an annual income of two millions, and a like sum was to be divided between his brothers and sisters. These sums were to be partly obtained from the French treasury and partly from the immense revenues of the countries yielded by France. On these conditions, Napoleon pledged himself to give up the entire treasury extraordinary as well as the crown diamonds. Out of this treasury extraordinary, he was allowed to distribute two millions in ready money to officers whose services he wished to recompense. A principality was promised to Prince Eugene, when the territorial question should be definitely settled. Lastly, the Empress Josephine was to receive her pension, which was reduced to a million.

It was only after protracted debates that these arrangements were adopted. The Provisional Government opposed them, not on account of the extent of the pecuniary sacrifices involved, but on account of the implied recognition of the imperial reign. Alexander wished that Napoleon's representatives should meet M. de Talleyrand and the allied ministers in a general assembly. The discussion was warm, and Marshal Macdonald, whom the petty details of this discussion rendered indignant, energetically supported the cause of the imperial family. At length the insolence and pride of M. de Caulaincourt, which surpassed even the habitual haughtiness of M. de Talleyrand, put an end to the debate, and the general conditions were agreed on. It was the 10th April, and the approaching arrival of the Count d'Artois was announced.

On the 11th, there was a general assembly of the ministers of the different Powers, of the members of the Provisional Government, and of Napoleon's representatives. The treaty was signed by the ministers of the allied monarchs, in separate copies, and M. de Talleyrand, in the name of the royal government, without adhering to the treaty himself, guaranteed the execution of the conditions that concerned France. M. de Caulaincourt then, for the first time, produced the act of abdication, and presented it to M. de Talleyrand, by whom it was received with undisguised joy.

Such was the end of the greatest power that had reigned in Europe since the days of Charlemagne, and the conqueror who had signed the treaties of Campo-Formio, of Lunéville, of Vienna, of Tilsit, of Bayonne, and of Presbourg was obliged to accept, through the medium of his noble-minded representative, not the treaty of Châtillon, which he was perfectly right to refuse, but the

treaty of the 11th April, which accorded to him the isle of Elba, with a pension for himself and his family; terrible example of the chastisement that Fortune reserves for those who allow themselves to be intoxicated by her favors!

These signatures being exchanged, M. de Talleyrand, with a mixture of dignity and courtesy, said to the three envoys of Napoleon, that their duty towards their unhappy master being amply fulfilled, the government now reckoned on their adhesion and attached importance to it, on account of their personal merit and high reputation. To this speech M. de Caulaincourt replied, that his duty to Napoleon would not be fully discharged until all the subscribed conditions should have been fulfilled. Marshal Ney replied that he had already given in his adhesion to the Bourbon government, and was ready to repeat the act. "I," said Marshal Macdonald, "shall follow the example of M. de Caulaincourt." After these explanations the meeting broke up, and M. de Caulaincourt, accompanied by Marshal Macdonald, set off immediately for Fontainebleau.

Shortly before the treaty of the 11th April was signed, Napoleon demanded from M. de Caulaincourt that he should send back the act of abdication. Though he was in no way deceived as to the sentiments of Austria, and understood perfectly well, that Francis II., though loving his daughter would prefer the interests of his empire to hers, he had still flattered himself that if Maria Louisa had an interview with her father, she would obtain something, perhaps Tuscany, to which he attached especial importance as being in the neighbourhood of the isle of Elba. He therefore advised her, in the secret correspondence kept up between them, to apply to the Emperor Francis. Maria Louisa, following this advice, sent several emissaries to Dijon, and received from her father protestations of tenderness of a nature to inspire hope. At the same time, erroneous information received by Napoleon, made him believe that Francis II., disapproved the haste with which the regency of Maria Louisa had been condemned for the benefit of the Bourbons. It was in consequence of this erroneous information that Napoleon had recalled his act of abdication, but without insisting on it, for he soon discovered the shallowness of the information he had received. M. de Caulaincourt had flatly refused to break off the negotiations. Napoleon, appreciating his motives of action, received M. de Caulaincourt and Marshal Macdonald with much cordiality and many expressions of gratitude. He took the treaty from their hands, read it, and approved of it, with the exception of the refusal of Tuscany, which he regretted. He thanked his two negotiators warmly, especially Marshal Macdonald, from whom he could not have expected such friendly conduct. He afterwards dismissed both, as if desirous of taking some repose, and wished to defer, until the morrow, the renewal of the conversation.

Scarcely had the negotiators left, than the Emperor, according to his wont, recalled M. de Caulaincourt, anxious to pour forth his

feelings in the confidence of friendship. He was calm, more gentle than ordinary, and there was something solemn in his tone and gesture. During the late extraordinary events, M. de Caulaincourt had profoundly admired the mental strength with which Napoleon had restrained his emotions, and raised himself, so to speak, on the wings of his genius, above sublunary things; but he seemed at the present moment to rise higher than ever, and spoke of passing events with extraordinary disinterestedness. He again thanked M. de Caulaincourt, and, this time, personally, for his conduct, which had inspired him with the deepest sense of gratitude, but not the slightest surprise. He repeated that the treaty had amply provided for his family, and afforded more than enough for him, who really wanted nothing, but at the same time, he expressed his regret about Tuscany. "It is a fine principality," he said, "and would have suited my son. On this throne, where mental power is hereditary, my son might have been happy, happier, perhaps, than on the throne of France, continually exposed to revolutionary storms, and where my race has only one claim—victory. Besides, this throne would have been necessary to my wife. I know her; she is good-hearted, but weak-minded and frivolous. "My dear Caulaincourt," he added, "Cæsar might again return to the rank of a citizen, but his empress could scarcely surrender the rank of Cæsar's wife. Maria Louisa would have found at Florence something of the splendour with which she was surrounded at Paris. She would only have had to cross the Piombino canal to pay me a visit; my prison would have been, as it were, enlocked in her states; under these circumstances, I could have hoped to see her, I might even have been able to visit her, and when the European Powers would have been convinced that I had renounced the world, and, like a new Sancho, *I only thought of the welfare of my island*, they would have sanctioned these little trips; I should have enjoyed a happiness of which I knew little, amid all the splendour of my glory. But now that my wife would be obliged to come from Parma, and traverse so many foreign states to come to me—God only knows. But let us quit this subject. You have done all you could, and I thank you; Austria is utterly heartless."

The Emperor again pressed M. de Caulaincourt's hand, and spoke of his entire life with extraordinary impartiality and incomparable greatness of mind.

He acknowledged that he had deceived himself, that enamoured of France, of the rank she held in the world, and of the higher rank she might attain, he had wished to raise with her and for her, a sovereign empire, upon which all the other empires of Europe would have been dependant, and he acknowledged that after having almost realized this glorious dream, he had not had the good sense to pause at the limit traced by the nature of things. He afterwards spoke of his generals, recalled Massena to memory and declared, that of all his lieutenants, he had performed the highest deeds; he did not speak of the campaign in

Portugal, only too well justified alas! by our misfortune in the Peninsula, but he repeated what he had already said more than once, that there was one thing wanted to the noble defence of Genoa in 1800, and that was twenty-four hours longer resistance. He spoke of Suchet, of his profound wisdom in war and administration, said something of Marshal Soult and his ambition, did not utter a word about Davout, of whom he had lost sight for the past two years, and who at that very moment was performing at Hambourg prodigies of valour, of which France knew nothing; he afterwards spoke of Berthier, of his good sense, his honesty, and his rare talents as head of the staff. "I loved him," he said, "and he has just caused me great pain of mind. I begged him to pass some time with me in the isle of Elba, and he did not seem willing to consent. And yet I would not have retained him long. Do you suppose that I would wish to prolong indefinitely an idle and useless life? This proof of devotedness might not have cost him much, but his heart is broken, he is a father, he thinks of his children; he fancies he might be able to keep the principality of Neufchâtel, he is mistaken, but his error is excusable. I love Berthier, I shall never cease to love him. Ah, Caulaincourt, without being indulgent, it is impossible to judge men correctly, and above all, to govern them!" Then Napoleon spoke of his other generals; he named Gérard and Clausel as the hope of the French army, and made some reflections, not bitter, but sad, on the eagerness exhibited by certain officers to abandon him. "Why do they not act frankly?" he said. "I see their desire, their embarrassment, I try to put them at their ease, I tell them they have nothing more to do, but to enter the service of the Bourbons, and instead of profitting of the offered opportunity, they make me empty protestations of fidelity, and afterwards send their adhesion underhand to Paris, and frame a pretext for leaving me. I detest dissimulation. It is very natural that old soldiers covered with wounds, should seek to preserve under the new government, the reward of the services they have rendered to France! Why deny their motives of action? But men never see clearly what they ought to do, and what is due to them; they seldom speak or act consistently. My brave Drouot is very different. He is not satisfied, I see it clearly, but it is not through personal feeling, but on account of our poor France. He is not pleased with me, but he will, however, remain with me, less through personal affection for me, than through respect for himself. Drouot! Drouot! he is virtue itself!"

Napoleon spoke afterwards of his ministers. He appeared to feel that not one of them had come from Blois to bid him farewell. He spoke of the Duke de Feltre as he had always thought of him, which was not very flattering. He spoke highly of the honesty, knowledge, and attention to business displayed by the Duke de Gaete and Count Mollièn. He afterwards expatiated on the character of Admiral Decrès. Though he had no personal

affection for this minister, he seemed to attach an importance to him proportionate to his abilities. "He is hard-hearted, pitiless in his remarks," said Napoleon; "he takes pleasure in making himself detested, but he is of a high order of mind. The misfortunes that befel the navy are not attributable to him, but to circumstances. He prepared, with very little expense, a magnificent fleet. Caulaincourt, I had one hundred and twenty ships-of-the-line. England, whilst walking over the waters, did not sleep. She has done me much harm, undoubtedly; but I have left a poisoned arrow in her side. It is I who augmented that national debt that will press on future generations, and will become an unceasingly oppressive, if not overwhelming, burden to her." Napoleon also spoke of M. de Bassano, M. de Talleyrand, and the Duke of Otranto. "Bassano is falsely accused," he said; "but in all ages a victim has been sacrificed to public opinion. My most serious resolves have been imputed to him. You know—you, who have seen all, know how it really is. He is an honest man, well-informed, industrious, devoted, and of inviolable fidelity. He has not Talleyrand's *esprit*, but he is far better. Talleyrand, whatever may be said to the contrary, has not opposed me a whit more than Bassano in the acts with which I am reproached. He has just found a part suited to him, and has invested himself with it. As to the rest, it is to be wished that the Bourbons would govern in his spirit. He will be a valuable adviser for them, but they are no more capable of keeping him six months than he is of remaining six months with them. Fouché is a wretch. He will go about busying himself, and will embroil everything. He hates me intensely, and fears me as much. That is why he would wish to see me at the extremity of the ocean."

This conversation was interminable, and M. de Caulaincourt admired Napoleon's judgment: impartial, but generally indulgent, in which there appeared scarcely a trace of human passion. At this moment Count Orloff was announced; he brought the ratification of the treaty of the 11th April, which the Emperor Alexander had had the courtesy to forward immediately. Napoleon appeared annoyed at this, and did not wish to part with M. de Caulaincourt, nor was he very anxious to place his signature to such an act. He continued the conversation, and after having spoken of others, he spoke of himself, of his position, and said with an accent of profound grief, "Undoubtedly I suffer, but amid my many causes of grief, there is one which exceeds all the rest; it is the idea of finishing my career by signing a treaty, in which I have not been able to stipulate one general interest, not even one moral interest, such as the preservation of our colours, or the maintenance of the Legion of Honour; to sign a treaty by which I receive money. Ah, Caulaincourt, but for my son, my wife, my sisters, my brothers, Josephine, Eugene, Hortense, I would tear the treaty in a thousand pieces! Ah, if my generals, who so long displayed such great courage, had only been courageous two hours longer, I

would have changed our destinies. If even this contemptible Senate, which, apart from me, has no power to negotiate, had not taken my place, if I had been allowed to stipulate conditions for France, with the force I still retained, with the fear I still inspired, I would have turned our defeat to a very different purpose. I would have obtained something for France, and afterwards sunk into oblivion myself. But to leave France so little, after having received her so great! What misery!"

And Napoleon seemed overwhelmed by the weight of his reflection. In contemplating the faults of others he beheld his own, for, in fact, if his generals had at last refused to follow him, it was because he had exhausted them; if the Senate had not allowed him to act, it was because they felt the necessity of snatching the power from his hands, in order to terminate a fearful crisis. He perceived all these truths, without giving them utterance; and, in judging, he punished himself, for it is so that Providence chastises the man of genius—deputing to him the task of self-condemnation, of self-torture, by the clearness with which he views the past and future. Then, with still greater grief, Napoleon added, "And these humiliations are not the last. I am about to traverse these southern provinces where men's passions are so violent. Let the Bourbons get me assassinated; I can pardon that; but I shall be, perhaps, abandoned to the insults of this abominable populace of the south. To die on the field of battle is nothing, but amid filth and by such hands!"

Napoleon seemed at this moment to foresee with horror, not death, which he was accustomed to brave, but degrading punishment. Observing that the conversation had lasted very long, he apologised for having detained M. de Caulaincourt, and dismissed him with the most affectionate expressions, saying he should send, did he need him again. M. de Caulaincourt left, profoundly impressed by what he had heard, and seeing, as he thought, in these long recapitulations, and in the Emperor's decisive judgment on himself and others, an adieu to worldly pomp, but not to life. He was mistaken. Napoleon himself believed that he was bidding farewell to life, when he poured forth his feelings in that manner. He had, in fact, taken the strange resolution, one wholly unworthy of him, of committing suicide. Persons of an active temperament rarely conceive a disgust of life, they make too much occupation for themselves to wish to renounce existence. Napoleon, who was one of the most active of the human race, had therefore no suicidal tendencies; he, on the contrary, despised self-destruction, as a reckless renunciation of the chances the future may present, chances that are as numerous as unexpected for him who knows how to bear up under the temporary burden of evil days. Nevertheless, in adversity, even when most courageously supported, there are moments of dejection, when the mind and the heart bow beneath the weight of misfortune.

Napoleon experienced on this day one of those moments of

insurmountable depression. The treaty relative to his family being signed, the honour of the sovereigns pledged for its fulfilment, he believed that his son, his wife and relations were provided for, and he thought he had fulfilled his last duties. It seemed to him that for honest people, his death would impress on the engagement he had signed, a sacred character, and that ceasing to fear, they would also cease to hate him. Therefore, believing his career at an end, and feeling it impossible to realize the idea of existence in a small Mediterranean island, where he would only breathe the hot air of Italy, not even reckoning on the sweet ties of home affections—for in this moment of sinister clairvoyance he foresaw that he would be deprived of his son, of his wife; humiliated at being obliged to sign a treaty, exclusively personal, and, in point of fact, pecuniary; wearied of hearing every day the murmurs of public maledictions, beholding with horror, the prospect of being abandoned to the insults of a despicable populace, he for a moment detested life, and resolved to have recourse to poison which he had long kept in his possession to be used in extremity. In Russia, on the morning of the sanguinary battle of Malo-Jaroslawetz, after the sudden irruption of the Cossacks, which had involved him in personal danger, he foresaw the possibility of becoming a prisoner to the Russians, and requested Doctor Yvan to supply him a strong draught of opium, as a means of escaping the intolerable torture of adorning the conqueror's car. Doctor Yvan, understanding the necessity of such a precaution, prepared the required dose, and took the precaution of enclosing it in a little bag, so that the Emperor could always carry it about with him. On his return to France, Napoleon did not wish to destroy it, and had placed the poison amongst his travelling equipments, where it still remained.

At the close of the day, occupied by these overwhelming reflections, seeing his family provided for, and, as he believed, doing them no injury by his death, he selected this night of the 11th April, to escape the labour of life, which he could no longer support, after having drawn it so heavily upon him; taking from his travelling apparatus the formidable dose, he diluted it with a little water, swallowed it and then lay back in his bed, where he believed he was about to take his last sleep.

Awaiting thus the effects of the poison, he wished to bid a last adieu to M. de Caulaincourt, and above all, express his last wishes with regard to his wife and son. He had M. de Caulaincourt called about three in the morning, and apologizing for disturbing his sleep, said he had some important instructions to add to those he had already given. His features were scarcely distinguishable in the fading light; his voice was weak and changed in tone. Without mentioning what he had done, he took from under his pillow a letter and a portfolio, and presenting them to M. de Caulaincourt, he said: "This portfolio and this letter are intended for my wife and son, and I pray you to deliver them with your own hand. My wife and son will both stand in need of your prudent and honest

advice, for their position will soon be perilous, and I beg you not to abandon them. This case, pointing to his travelling case, is to be given to Eugene. Tell Josephine I thought of her before quitting the world. Keep this cameo in remembrance of me. You are an honest man, you have always told me the truth. Embrace me." At these last words, which could leave no doubt as to the resolution adopted by Napoleon, M. de Caulaincourt, though not easily moved, seized the hands of his master, and bathed them with tears. He suddenly perceived a glass near the Emperor, in which there were still some traces of the deadly draught. He questioned the Emperor, whose sole reply was to beg him to restrain his feelings, not to quit him, but allow him to finish his agony in peace. M. de Caulaincourt endeavoured to escape and call for assistance. Napoleon first entreated, then commanded him to do nothing of the kind: he did not desire any commotion, he did not wish that a stranger eye should gaze upon his death-stamped features.

M. de Caulaincourt seemed paralyzed, and remained standing near the bed, where that wondrous life was about to be terminated, when Napoleon's face became suddenly convulsed. He was suffering intensely, but endeavoured to resist the pain. Violent spasms soon came on, indicative of approaching discharges of the stomach. After resisting for some time this natural movement, Napoleon was obliged to yield. A part of the dose he had taken was thrown up in a silver basin held by M. de Caulaincourt. The latter profitted of this opportunity to withdraw for a moment and call assistance. Doctor Yvan came quickly. In his presence everything was explained. Napoleon begged a last service from the physician, it was to renew the dose of opium, as he feared that which remained in his stomach might not be sufficient to effect his object. Doctor Yvan appeared horrified at the proposal. He had in Russia supplied his master with poison, to furnish him with the means of escaping from a fearful position, but he bitterly regretted having done so, and now, when Napoleon insisted on the renewal of the dose, he fled from the chamber and did not return. At this moment General Bertram and M. de Bassano arrived. Napoleon begged they would not divulge this sad episode of his life, which he still hoped would be the last. In fact, there was every reason to believe so; for he seemed very much sunken and almost exhausted. He fell into a lethargy which lasted several hours.

His faithful servants stood round, motionless and dismayed. From time to time the Emperor experienced dreadful pains of the stomach, and said several times: "How difficult death is here, and how easy on the field of battle! Ah, why did I not die at Arcis-sur-Aube!"

Night closed without bringing fresh misfortunes. Napoleon began to believe that he had not reached the term of his life, and the devoted friends that surrounded him hoped so too; they were happy that he had escaped death, though believing that life could possess little attraction for him now. During these proceedings,

Marshal Macdonald was announced. He was desirous, before quitting Fontainebleau, to pay his respects to the deposed Emperor, "I would willingly receive this worthy man," said Napoleon, "but he must wait a little. I would not wish him to see me in my present condition." Count Orloff awaited the ratifications, for which he had come. It was the morning of the 12th; at this hour, the Count d'Artois was about to enter Paris, and many persons were eager to quit Fontainebleau. Napoleon wished to recover a little, before admitting any one into his presence.

After a lethargy of considerable length, M. de Caulaincourt and one of the three personages initiated in the secret of the poisoning, took Napoleon in their arms and placed him near an open window. The air sensibly revived him. "Fate has decided it," he said to M. de Caulaincourt, "I must live and await what Providence has appointed me." He then consented to receive Marshal Macdonald. The latter was introduced without being informed of the carefully-guarded secret. He found Napoleon lying on a *chaise-longue* and was horrified at the state of exhaustion in which he was. He respectfully expressed his concern.* Napoleon affected to attribute his illness to an affection of the stomach, to which he was subject, and which already announced the malady of which he died. He affectionately pressed the marshal's hand: "You are," he said, "an honest man, whose generous conduct towards me I appreciate, and I would I could testify my gratitude towards you otherwise than by words. But honours are no longer at my disposal; money I have not; and, besides, it would not be worthy of your acceptance. But I can offer you a token of remembrance, which will, I hope, be acceptable." He then asked for a sword that was lying near his pillow, and, presenting it to the marshal, said, "This is the sword of Mourad Bey; it was one of the trophies of the battle of Aboukir; I have often worn it. You will keep it in remembrance of our late transactions, and you will transmit it to your children." The marshal accepted this generous gift with profound emotion; he embraced the Emperor with intense feeling. They separated never to meet again, though neither had finished his career. The marshal set off immediately for Paris. Berthier had also left, promising to return, but in a manner that had not convinced his old master. "You will see that he will not come back," said Napoleon, sadly, but without bitterness.

During this interval, M. de Caulaincourt had at length found time to remit to Count Orloff the ratification of the 11th of April, with the imperial signature attached. He returned to Napoleon, who had just received an extremely affectionate letter from Maria Louisa. This letter gave him the most gratifying intelligence of his son, and expressed boundless devotedness on the part of the Empress, who declared her determination of joining him as soon as possible. This letter produced an extraordinary effect on Napo-

* This is the marshal's own recital in his still manuscript memoirs.

leon. It, in some sort, recalled him to life. It was as though a new existence had been presented to his powerful imagination. "Providence has decreed it," he said to M. de Caulaincourt, "I will live,—who can penetrate the future? Besides, my wife, my son will be all-sufficient for me. I shall see them, I hope I shall see them often. When the allied powers will be convinced that I have no thought of quitting my retreat, they will allow me to see my family, perhaps to visit them, and then I shall write the history of what we have done. Caulaincourt," he cried, "I shall immortalise your names." He afterwards added, "Even that is a reason for living."

Then, with extraordinary mobility of feeling, filled with sudden affection for this new existence, whose image was presented to his imagination, he busied himself in the details of his establishment at the isle of Elba, and wished that M. de Caulaincourt should go in person, either to Maria Louisa or the sovereigns, to arrange the mode in which his wife should join him. He had not thought of keeping any money for himself; the military chest had been exhausted in paying the soldiers. Some millions remained in the possession of Maria Louisa. Napoleon intended to leave her this sum, that she might not be forced to ask pecuniary aid from any one, and especially from her father. But when the necessity of drawing on this last remaining fund was proved to Napoleon, he consented to participate in these millions. He deputed M. de Caulaincourt to visit the Empress, and again advise her to ask an interview with the Emperor Francis, who, perhaps, touched by her presence, would accord her Tuscany. She was afterwards to join her husband by Orleans on the Bourbonnais route. Napoleon reiterated his injunctions to M. de Caulaincourt not to press Maria Louisa to join him, but allow her sentiments on this subject to rise spontaneously from her heart, "for," he repeated several times, "I understand women well, and particularly Maria Louisa." To offer her a prison instead of the court of France, such as I made it, would be a terrible trial. If she came, looking sad and dejected, I should be miserable. I prefer solitude to the sight of sadness or despondency. If my wife's feelings impel her to come to me, I shall receive her with open arms; if not, let her remain at Parma, or Florence, where she will ultimately reign. I shall only ask her to let me have my son."

After giving utterance to these scruples, Napoleon applied himself to the details of his journey. It was agreed that he should be accompanied to the isle of Elba by the commissioners of the allied powers, and he appeared to set especial importance on the presence of the English commissioner. "The English," he said, "are a free people, and respect themselves." Having arranged all these details, he took leave of M. de Caulaincourt, repeating his assurance of absolute confidence and eternal gratitude. M. de Caulaincourt set out to fulfil his mission to Maria Louisa and the sovereigns.

Whilst this mournful scene took place at Fontainebleau, a very different one was being enacted at Paris; for, amid the unceasing vicissitudes of this life, joy, in her perpetual rounds, sometimes lights up, suddenly, faces long shaded by woe, withdrawing her radiance from features on which she had long shone, and which now lapse into midnight gloom. In fact, the Count d'Artois, who was then making his solemn entry into Paris, was surrounded by excited, eager, welcoming crowds.

M. de Vitrolles joined the Prince on the 7th. He found him at Nancy, assisting at a *Te Deum*, sung to celebrate what was called the deliverance of France. The Count d'Artois was seized with a very natural emotion, when he learned that he was about to enter Paris, from which he had fled in 1790, and absent from which he had lived proscribed about a quarter of a century. He was surrounded by some faithful friends. M. M. François d'Escars, Jules de Polignac, Roger de Damas, de Bruges, L'Abbé de Latil, all of whom sympathized in his joy, and prepared to accompany him to the capital. The Prince left Count Roger de Damas at Nancy, where, under the title of Governor, he was to assume the administration of Lorraine, and, after having provided a uniform of the National Guard, he set out, that he might be in the neighbourhood of Paris, on the day appointed for his entry.

The provinces through which the Prince and his suite journeyed, were horribly devastated. Putrid bodies of men and horses filled the air with pestilence; farm-houses were reduced to ashes; bridges were barricaded or cut down; the population had taken flight or were hidden, and some ran to the road-side, on hearing the noise of wheels different from those of cannon. They were entranced with joy on hearing intelligence of peace, and astonished when they learned the return of the Bourbons. The people evinced no pleasure on hearing the name of these princes, for in the eastern provinces, Napoleon was still regarded by the inhabitants as the defender of their native land, though his policy had drawn foreigners thither. When the royal suite arrived at Châlons, the place was empty. At Meaux, the bishop, the prefect, the public functionaries, and the principal inhabitants quitted the city that they might not be present at the arrival of the Prince. However, when the Count d'Artois succeeded in making himself seen or heard, he never failed to make an agreeable impression. Possessing little learning, but endowed with a remarkable facility of expression, perfect gracefulness of demeanour and a noble face, to which an aquiline nose and hanging lip gave the distinctive characteristics of his family; a marked expression of goodness and a great desire to please, rendered him universally attractive. At Châlons and Meaux, he eventually dissipated the coldness of those with whom he succeeded in obtaining an interview, and left them much better disposed than he had found them.

As he drew near Paris, M. de Vitrolles received a letter from

M. de Talleyrand, informing him of what had taken place, that is to say, the adoption and publication of the Constitution of the Senate, the obligation imposed on the King of swearing to this Constitution before being invested with the royal power, and the consequent obligation on the part of the Count d'Artois to take some pledge before being recognized as lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and, lastly, the universal desire of sensible people and, especially of the allied sovereigns, to see the tricolor cockade assumed by the Bourbon princes. No sooner had M. de Vitrolles received this letter, than he ran to the Count d'Artois, exclaiming loudly against what he called indifference, the frivolity of M. de Talleyrand, who, he said, was not able to resist any request, and for want of firmness in his view, promised sometimes to one, sometimes to another, and did not keep his word with any. The Count d'Artois was at this moment so elated with joy, that it would be difficult to mingle a feeling of sadness with his exultation. Both he and his friends entertained an instinctive repugnance to the tricolor cockade, but the constitutional subtilities troubled them less, and the Count d'Artois, astonished at the indignation of M. de Vitrolles, asked him whether what he heard was really sufficiently bad to make him take fire as he did, and above all to make such an outcry. The Prince undertook personally to calm M. de Vitrolles, and it was agreed that the latter should go secretly to Paris, to remove or elude the principal difficulties. Meanwhile the Prince continued his journey and passed the night at the Château de Livry.

M. de Vitrolles having, on the evening of the 11th, reached M. de Talleyrand's, *Rue Saint-Florentin*, he found everything as he had left it—that is to say, in extreme confusion. In the court, there were Cossacks stretched on straw; on the first floor, the Emperor Alexander, surrounded by his staff; on the entre-sol, the provisional governor; in one apartment, the members of the government—in another, some copyists; and M. de Talleyrand, sometimes in one chamber, sometimes in another, receiving petitioners with a bland smile, and advisers with a shake of the head that involved no pledge, being as little conclusive as possible, leaving things to time, which certainly does much, but does not do everything. M. de Vitrolles, always very active, but less yielding in proportion as his prince drew nearer Paris, flew into a violent passion against the tricolor cockade and against the oath required of King Louis XVIII., before being invested with royal power. He seemed to say that the crown would be refused on such conditions. The colorless and ironical countenance of M. de Talleyrand presented a great stumbling-block to headlong talkers; he smiled at the threats uttered by M. de Vitrolles, and then proceeded to explanations.

Touching the cockade, a singular accident, whether fortuitous or concerted, had occurred, which had very much simplified the difficulty. Scarcely had the Constitution been proclaimed, when many

Royalists, intoxicated with joy, hastened to the provinces, announcing the return of the Bourbons, and wearing the white cockade in their hats, as if this emblem was to be henceforth universally adopted. Two or three of these went to Rouen, where Marshal Jourdan commanded a military division. This Marshal, whose aversion to the Empire, and whose liberal and monarchical opinions disposed him to look favourably on the return of the Bourbons, if restricted by good laws, had shown himself willing to subscribe to the acts of the Senate; he was, moreover, told that the white cockade had been adopted at Paris, and Marshal Jourdan, attaching importance only to the essential act—the recall of the Bourbons, with a Liberal Constitution—made an address to his troops, announcing to them the new revolution, inviting them to give in their adhesion and assume the white cockade. He gave them the example by displaying one himself. Having only to do with scattered detachments and thinly-supplied depôts, the Marshal met no resistance. The white cockade had been accepted by the troops, and the information was circulated in Paris as a conclusive fact; so that the people of Rouen assumed the white cockade, believing they were following the example of the Parisians, and the Parisians did the same, fancying they were sanctioned by the example of the inhabitants of Rouen. Thus, the question being looked on as decided, an order was issued on the 9th, commanding the Parisian National Guard to assume the white cockade, though that body had at first abhorred the idea. On this point the difficulty was nearly surmounted—at least, as far as the Parisian Guard was concerned; and, as the Count d'Artois was to wear the uniform of this guard, which was tricolor, it was hoped that a kind of compromise had been effected between the two cockades. It was, therefore, arranged that the Count d'Artois should enter the city, wearing the white cockade in his hat, and dressed in the tricolor uniform of the National Guard.

As to the Constitution, the arrangement was more difficult. M. de Talleyrand, de Jaucourt, and de Dalberg, members of the Provisional Government, discussed the question with M. de Vitrolles, and did not know in what way to resolve the difficulty. During these proceedings, some of the many frequenters of the house, having called at M. de Talleyrand's, they were admitted to the consultation, where the great difficulty was to make the Count d'Artois Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, without violating the decision of the Senate, and without pledging him to an engagement opposed to his wishes, and which he was not authorised to take, not having had time to consult Louis XVIII. An expedient presented itself, this was, that M. de Talleyrand should give in his resignation as President of the Provisional Government, and transfer this presidency to the Count d'Artois. But even in this case the intervention of the Senate would be needed, and to obtain it some connection should be formed with that body. Wearied by the recurrence of so many difficulties, M. de Talleyrand said to M.

de Vitrolles, "Enter Paris first, and we shall consider the rest afterwards." Thus, according to his custom, he allowed things to take their own course, when he was not able to arrange them himself.

M. de Vitrolles returned on the evening of the 11th to the Castle of Livry, after having arranged that on the next day, the 12th April, the Count d'Artois should make his entry into Paris. M. de Talleyrand had then at his command M. Ouvrard, who had just issued from the imperial prisons, and who had been always renowned for his luxurious habits. This gentleman M. de Talleyrand deputed to make arrangements for the reception of the Prince at Livry. The Cavalry National Guard, with six hundred infantry of the same corps, were sent to Livry to serve as an escort of honour to the Prince. The latter, radiant with joy, received them with a cordiality that touched them deeply; and, as if he wished to correct the effect of the white cockade displayed in his hat, he told them he had procured at Nancy a uniform similar to theirs, and that he would next day enter Paris dressed like them, and his heart imbued with corresponding sentiments. Cheers replied to these gracious words, and for a moment the representatives of ancient and modern opinions seemed to agree.

On the following day, the 12th, a considerable influx of people had concentrated from early morning on the route and in the streets leading to the Bondy Barriere. Men, born Royalists, and those that the Revolution had made such — and these were not a few—were foremost to assist at the spectacle which they never could have anticipated; for, after the scaffold of Louis XVI., and the victories of Napoleon, who would have ever believed that Paris would open its gates to receive the Bourbons in triumph? And yet, with a little reflection, it might have been predicted, for we may naturally reckon on abrupt and violent reactionary movements when the rational and legitimate object of revolutions is overstepped. But who reflects, especially amongst the masses? At this period, so many persons had lost their fathers, their brothers, and their children on the scaffold or the field of battle, so many persons had seen their families dispersed and their property devastated, that their emotion was profound at the bare idea of again beholding a prince, who was for them a living representative of a time when they were young and believed themselves happy. Under such circumstances, the prince's defects were easily forgotten. In the expectation of beholding the prince, thousands of faces exhibited strong emotion, and many were bathed in tears. The prudent bourgeoisie of Paris—always the best representative of public feeling—had been long attached to Napoleon, who had procured them rest, combined with glory, and they had become detached from him solely on account of his faults; but they now clearly perceived, that Napoleon once overthrown, the Bourbons became his necessary and desirable successors, that the respect which surrounded their title to the throne, that the peace of whose

continuance they were a pledge, that the liberty which could be so well combined with their hereditary authority, the bourgeoisie, we say, perceived that all these accompaniments were the pledges of a peaceful and enduring happiness for France. The bourgeoisie, therefore, were animated by the best sentiments towards the Bourbons, and ready to throw themselves into their arms, if they exhibited somewhat of good will and good sense. The pleasing personal appearance of the Count d'Artois was well calculated to ripen these dispositions, and convert them into a universal burst of enthusiasm.

About eleven in the forenoon, the Count d'Artois, surrounded by a vast cavalcade, composed of persons of every class, but especially of the ancient nobility, took his way towards the Bondy Barriere. Every moment new comers, high functionaries, French and foreign officers, joined the cortège, and when they became recognised, the ranks opened, that they might reach the prince. The Royalists, by whom he was surrounded, were highly elated. If, amongst the persons who arrived, there were any of the old nobility whose fidelity had for a moment wavered, loud cries of *Vive le roi* burst out at their approach, and proved that forgetfulness was not a royalist quality, even with regard to one another. M. de Montmorency, who had joined the Empire, when everybody in France did so, and now held the rank of assistant-major-general in the National Guard, arrived with his *chef*, General Dessoles, and was assailed with affected cries of *Vive le roi*, as if it were needful to teach a Montmorency affection for the Bourbons. As the cortège approached the barrier, a group of horsemen was seen in full uniform, and wearing the tricolor panache; this group consisted of the Marshals Ney, Marmont, Moncey, Kellerman, Sérurier, who had not laid aside the colors which were still those of the army. Shouts were again raised, but without violence, for an infallible instinct taught even the most impassioned friends of the prince, that in the presence of these formidable men, it was better to restrain their feelings. Marshal Ney headed the group. His strongly-marked features, violently contracted, revealed a feeling of discomfort, but without the slightest admixture of fear, for no person had dared to fail in respect towards him. At the cry of the "marshals," the ranks of the royal cortège instantly opened, and a passage was formed. The Count d'Artois, quickening his horse's pace, advanced towards the marshals and pressed the hand of each. "Gentlemen," he said, "you are very welcome; you, who have spread in every quarter, the glory of France. Believe me, my brother and I have not been the last to applaud your high deeds." Marshal Ney, being placed near the prince, at whose reception he was much gratified, was soon more at his ease. The Provisional Government, headed by the president, waited at the barrier to conduct the prince to the gates of the capital, M. de Talleyrand pronounced some courteous phrases, respectful and sententious, to which the prince replied by highly appropriate expressions, inspired

by the circumstances of the moment. The cortège then wended its way towards Nôtre-Dame, passing through the finest streets of Paris. In the suburbs the spectacle was not very cheerful, but it was otherwise on the Boulevards. The citizens, filled with hope of peace and rest, powerfully touched by the thousand memories that came thronging to their minds, and fascinated by the graceful demeanour of the prince, gave him a most cordial reception. The emotion increased as the cavalcade drew near the cathedral. At the gate, the prince was received by the Chapter. Care had been taken to remove Cardinal Maury, Archbishop of Paris, *non-institué*, by overloading him with insults during eight days in the Parisian journals. Thus the intrepid defender of the royal cause in the Constituante Assembly was so severely visited for some acts of weakness towards the Empire, that he was not included in the act of oblivion promised to all. The prince, being conducted to the royal *fauteuil* beneath the daïs, became, even in the church, the object of noisy demonstrations. All the grand functionaries of the State, all the staffs were assembled in the basilisk, the Senate alone was absent. The senators, at length resuming the dignity, which they ought never to have laid aside, did not wish to take part in any ceremony that might imply, on their part, a recognition of the authority of the Bourbons, until the latter should have pledged themselves to maintain the constitution. Fresh exclamations broke forth when the clergy pronounced the solemn words, "*Domine, salvum fac regem Ludovicum,*" and the Count d'Artois, who had not heard these words pronounced since his royal brother had lost his head on the scaffold, could not restrain his tears.

The ceremony being terminated, the Count d'Artois was conducted to the Tuileries, amid crowds still uttering enthusiastic acclamations. Arrived at the palace of his fathers, the emotion of the prince became so strong that he could no longer support himself; his attendants, with tears in their eyes, hastened to his aid, and the air re-echoed with cries of *Vive le roi.* Having reached the first floor of the palace, he thanked those who had accompanied him, particularly the marshals, who were now to retire. The latter, on quitting the Tuileries, and leaving the prince, surrounded by the high personages of the emigration, already felt that they would be strangers at this court, to whose re-establishment they had so largerly contributed, and a look of defiance and regret impressed on their faces, gave expression to the sentiments of their hearts! *

The impression produced in the capital by the proceedings of the day was intense. The prince had, no doubt, contributed to this, by the gracefulness of his demeanour, by his unaffected emotions, and the appropriateness of his language; but the effect was principally owing to the great memories of the past, so powerfully awakened on the occasion. It seemed as if the Nation and the Old Royal dynasty spoke to each other in these terms, "We have sought

* This is M. de Vitrolles' own recital.

our happiness apart from each other, and our paths have lain through blood and ruins; let us be happy, and let us be friends by making mutual concessions." The two parties did not, indeed, express these sentiments so clearly; but though not exactly defined, they were profoundly felt; and if the same memories, which at this moment so deeply stirred and attracted to mutual good feeling the minds of all, did not soon become a source of discord, France might enjoy, under the race of her ancient kings, a peaceful liberty. But what profound good sense would have been needed on all sides to produce such an effect. However, it was legitimate to hope for such a result, and it was believed that the great victim at Fountainebleau, immolated through his own fault, for the public welfare, would be sufficient to secure it.

The Tuileries remained open next day, and whoever appeared with a name, no matter whether his rank entitled him to the presentation or not, if he could only say that in such or such circumstances he had seen the princes, and had suffered with them or for them, he was graciously received, and his hand affectionately pressed by the Count d'Artois. Each word, uttered by the prince, circulated instantly through Paris, and flattery, prompt to aid sentiment, compared his gracious and affable demeanour with the abrupt and harsh deportment of the deposed usurper. On every side were heard and read perpetual comparisons between the gloomy, distrustful, and often cruel tyranny of the upstart soldier, and the paternal authority, so gentle and confiding, of the ancient legitimate princes. A thousand *jeux d'esprit*, more or less just, were made on this theme. "We have had enough of glory," said M. de Talleyrand to the Count d'Artois, "pray, let us now have honour." Genius had fallen into as much discredit as glory. These two words, "genius" and "glory," so ceaselessly repeated during the last fifteen years, had given place to others in the vocabulary of flatterers, and nothing was now heard of but "right," "legitimacy," and the wisdom of early times. But so it is, each epoque has its fashionable jargon, which becomes a characteristic of the time, but to which we must not attribute more importance that it deserves.

The Bourbons being now installed in the Tuileries, nothing more remained to be done, but to remove from France, into the retreat destined for him, the conquered lion, imprisoned at Fontainebleau. M. de Caulaincourt had been deputed to arrange with the foreign sovereigns the details of Napoleon's journey through France, about which some difficulties existed, on account of the southern provinces, through which he would be obliged to pass. It had been agreed that each of the great belligerent powers, Russia, Prussia, Austria, and England should send a commissioner as representative to Napoleon, to insure respect for his person and the execution of the treaty of the 11th April. On introducing M. de Shouvaloff as his commissioner, Alexander said to him, in presence of M. de Caulaincourt, "Your head shall answer to me for that of Napoleon, for our honour is at stake, and our first duty is to see that he is treated

with proper respect, and arrives in perfect safety at the isle of Elba." The Russian Monarch had, at the same time, sent one of his officers to Maria Louisa, that she might not be incommoded either by his Cossacks, nor by the more enthusiastic of the Royalists, who were, naturally, more numerous on the banks of the Loire than elsewhere.

Maria Louisa, whom we had left on the Blois route, after the battle of Paris, had travelled by short stages, sunk in despair, fearing for her husband's life, her son's crown, and for her own future fate, and, through weakness of understanding, not able to proportion these fears to the real extent of the danger. She had successively received intelligence of the taking of Paris, Napoleon's return towards the capital, his abdication, and lastly, the appropriation of the duchy of Parma to her and her son. She had suffered severely during her late vicissitudes, and though not endowed with the strength of mind that prompts to high resolves, she was gentle and kind; she was sincerely attached to Napoleon and felt a true maternal tenderness for the King of Rome. The fine duchy of Parma, where she was to reign independently, was without doubt, a certain indemnification for what she was losing; however, she scarcely reflected on that for the moment, and the sight of her husband, fallen from the greatest of thrones into a sort of prison, touched her weak, but not callous mind. Had she followed her own impulses and the advice of Madame de Luçay, she would have hastened at once to Fontainebleau, thrown herself into Napoleon's arms, and never left him. But the desire to see her father, a desire that Napoleon had encouraged in order to obtain Tuscany, made her hesitate. Moreover, an incident, insignificant in itself, had produced a painful impression on her mind and strongly indisposed her against the Bonapartes. Her brothers-in-law, seeing the enemy approach from the Loire, had advised her to retire beyond, which she was averse to do, and so noisy a scene ensued, that the servants hearing the outcry hastened to her assistance. She did not forget this annoyance, and when officers from Alexander and the Emperor Francis came to take her under their protection, she willingly went with them, not suspecting that with her son, she was about to become a pledge that the coalition would never yield. It was afterwards arranged that she should go to Rambouillet, to receive the visit of her father before her departure. The protection of Russia and Austria could not save her from a species of insult, only too general in times of political catastrophe. In leaving Paris, she had brought with her the remainder of Napoleon's personal treasure, consisting of eighteen millions in gold, silver, and plate. Added to this treasure were the crown diamonds. The eighteen millions were the last remains of what Napoleon had saved out of his civil list and the plate was his personal property. Out of these eighteen millions, some millions had been sent him to Fontainebleau, either to pay the army or defray the expenses at head-quarters, and in virtue of a formal order from Napoleon himself, Maria Louisa had put about two

millions into her travelling carriages for her own use. About two millions were placed in the waggons of the fugitive court. The Provisional Government being in want of money, conceived the idea of sending emissaries in pursuit of Maria Louisa to seize this treasure, under pretext that it was money taken from the public treasury. It was nothing of the kind, but in such cases, truth and justice have little weight.

According to another custom, common in similar crises, an enemy was chosen as agent, and he, too, selected from the lower ranks of the administration. This was M. Dudon, who had been expelled from the *Conseil d'Etat* by order of Napoleon. This agent having reached Orleans, seized the ten millions placed in the treasury waggons, Napoleon's personal plate, and a part of Maria Louisa's diamonds, notwithstanding her expostulations, and the efforts of the foreign commissioners to spare her such an insult. These imperial spoils were carried to Paris, where the new government was much in need of funds.

From Orleans, Maria Louisa went to Rambouillet, to await the arrival of her father. The Emperor of Austria had entered Paris on the 15th April, and had been received with great pomp by his allies and very coolly by the Parisians, who did not admire the conduct of the father of the Empress. He afterwards went to Rambouillet to see his daughter. He overwhelmed her with demonstrations of tenderness, and endeavoured to persuade her that all her misfortunes were attributable to her husband; that Austria had made every effort to bring about an honourable peace at Prague, at Frankfort, and lastly at Châtillon; that Napoleon had never been willing to subscribe to the conditions; that he was undoubtedly a man of genius, but wholly devoid of reason—one who had forced the European Powers to proceed to extremities; that as for him (the Emperor of Austria), he could not have acted otherwise than he had done; that his duty as a Sovereign had overlaid his tenderness as a father; but his paternal feelings had not been inactive, for he had procured his daughter a noble principality in Italy; that she should be sovereign there, and could devote herself to her son, and prepare for him a happy and peaceful future; that the most favoured branches of the imperial house were rarely treated so well; that when the present storm should have passed away, if she wished to visit her husband, and even to live with him, she would be free to do so, but at the actual moment, the wisest thing would be to remain at Vienna, until she should have recovered the effects of the many painful scenes through which she had lately passed; that she would be surrounded by the attentions of her family until she should be ready to go either to Parma or the isle of Elba—but that for the present it would be painful and inconvenient to attempt to join Napoleon, as she would be obliged to traverse France as a prisoner; that to her husband she would be rather an embarrassment than a comfort; that the life, the safety of the conquered and disarmed Emperor, were a deposit confided to the honour of the

allied monarchs; that on this subject she might make her mind easy, and take the advice of passing the first moments of this separation in the endearments of the family circle, and amid the memories of her childhood.

Maria Louisa, finding a solace for her weakness in these proposals, which were certainly made in the most affectionate manner, yielded to the wishes of her father, and consented to go to Vienna, whilst Napoleon took his way to the isle of Elba. She begged M. de Caulaincourt to assure Napoleon of her affection, of her constancy, and of her wish to join him as soon as possible, and bring her son, of whom she promised to take, and of whom she certainly did take, the greatest care.

As to the brothers, sisters, and mother of Napoleon, they had all scattered after Maria Louisa's departure, and sought to reach, as quickly as possible, the frontiers of Switzerland and Italy, in order to escape the insults with which they were threatened. As to the different ministers and agents of the Imperial Government who had accompanied the Regent to Blois, they too scattered, the greater number to go to Paris and give in their adhesion to the acts of the Senate.

Such was the fate of all who belonged to Napoleon in those days. Meanwhile he was at Fontainebleau, perfectly resigned to the rigour of his fate, anxious to see the preparations for his voyage finished—in short, he was anxious to be in the place where he was about to enjoy some kind of rest, though what its nature or duration might be he could not foresee. He each day saw solitude increasing around him. He thought it very natural that people should quit him, for these officers, who had always obeyed his commands, except on the last day, were naturally anxious to rally round the Bourbons, in order to preserve the rank which was the just reward of the labours of their life. He only wished they had been a little more frank, and to encourage, he addressed them in the following noble language:—"Serve the Bourbons," he said to them, "serve them faithfully; no other course remains to you. If they act wisely, France, under their rule, may be happy and respected. I resisted M. de Caulaincourt's earnest entreaties to make me accept the peace of Châtillon. I was right. For me these conditions were humiliating; they are not so for the Bourbons. They find France as they left her, and may accept her ancient limits without compromising their dignity. Such as she is, France will still be powerful; and though geographically diminished, she will be still as morally great as before, by her courage, her arts, and her intellectual influence over the rest of the world. If her territorial extent is diminished, her glory is not. The memory of our victories will remain to her as a monument of imperishable greatness, and which will always have immense weight in the councils of Europe. Serve France under the princes who bring back at this moment fortune, so fickle in times of revolution. Serve France under them as you

have done under me. Do not make the task too difficult for them, and leave me, but give me a place in your memory."

Such was the substance of his daily conversations in the continually-increasing solitude of Fontainebleau. We have seen how Ney and Macdonald had left him. Oudinot, Lefebvre and Moncey quitted him, each after his own fashion. Berthier had also retired, but, in some sort, by an order from his master. Napoleon had confided to him the command of the army, in order that he might transfer it to the Provisional Government, and that during this transmission he might confirm the grades bestowed as the reward of the blood shed in the last campaign. Berthier had promised to return; Napoleon expected him; but seeing hours and days pass, but no Berthier, he began to despair of seeing him, and suffered without complaining. Instead of the arrival of Berthier, each succeeding day witnessed the departure of some officer of high rank. One left Fontainebleau on account of his health, another for family reasons or for business—all promised to return soon, but not one kept his word. Napoleon feigned to enter into the motives of each, pressed affectionately the hands of all at parting, for he knew that he was receiving their last adieus, and listened, without believing, when they promised to return quickly. Gradually the palace of Fontainebleau had become empty. In the deserted courts the noise of carriage wheels was still sometimes heard, but after a little attention, the ear discovered that these were departing vehicles. Napoleon seemed, amid these scenes, as if assisting at his own funeral. Who has not often seen, at the commencement of winter, a powerful oak throwing wide its leafless branches, whilst at its feet lie the withered *débris* of its former rich vegetation? All around, through the cold air, reigns a profound silence, and sometimes the rustle of a falling leaf is heard. The tree, motionless and proud, retains only a few yellowed leaves, and they, too, are about to fall, like the others; but it does not rear less proudly above the surrounding plain its lofty, but despoiled head. And it was so Napoleon saw fall off, one by one, those who had accompanied him through the innumerable vicissitudes of his life. There were some who held on a day, two days at most, and who fell off on the third. All, ultimately, reached the same point. But there were a few whom nothing had been able to shake. Drouot, with disapprobation in his heart, sadness on his brow, and respect on his lips, had remained with his unfortunate master. Marshal Bertram had followed this generous example. The Dukes of Vicence and Bassano had also remained. The Duke de Vicence was not more of a courtier than formerly, whilst the Duke of Bassano seemed to have become a greater flatterer than ever, and thus gave an honourable excuse for his long submission, by proving that it was the result of a sincere and absolute admiration for Napoleon, alike independent of time and circumstances. Napoleon, touched by his dévotedness, said, more than once, "Bassano, people say that it is you who prevented my making peace! What do you

say to that? This accusation ought to make you smile, like all those that are lavished on me at present." And Napoleon repeatedly pressed Bassano's hand, acknowledging thus, in the most noble manner, that it was himself alone who was culpable.

This protracted agony was to come to a close. The commissioners of the different Powers arrived, and Napoleon received them with perfect courtesy, excepting the Prussian commissioner, who recalled two painful remembrances; his former faults with regard to Prussia, and the odious conduct of the Prussian army in our ravaged provinces. Napoleon received the Prussian commissioner politely but coldly. Everything being ready for the 18th, Napoleon, having received a more detailed account of what had taken place at Rambouillet, saw at a glance that this interview from which he had expected some advantage, less for himself than for Maria Louisa and the King of Rome, would only end in depriving him of their presence, and that these beloved objects, regarded not as members of his family, but as part of the pomp of his throne, would be taken from him with the throne itself. He was so exasperated at the idea that for a moment he was tempted to break the treaty of the 11th April and to plunge into new adventures. But, soon recovering his self-command, he became resigned and determined to set off. The orders for the Governor of Elba not being sufficiently explicit, M. de Caulaincourt again went to Paris, in order to get them more precisely detailed. At length, on the morning of the 20th, every thing being ready, Napoleon determined to quit Fontainebleau. The battalion of the Guard appointed to accompany him to the isle of Elba was already *en route*. The Guard was encamped at Fontainebleau, Napoleon wished to bid them farewell. He had them drawn up around him in a circle in the castle yard, then, in presence of his old soldiers, all profoundly touched, he pronounced the following words: "Soldiers, you, my old companions in arms, who have always accompanied me in the road to honour, we must at length separate. I might have remained longer among you, but to do so, I should have prolonged a bitter struggle, adding, perhaps, civil to foreign war, and I could not bear the idea of longer convulsing France. Enjoy the repose you have so justly earned and be happy. As for me, do not pity me. I have a mission and it is to fulfil that that I consent to live, and this mission is to relate to posterity the great deeds we have performed together. I would wish to clasp you all in my arms, but allow me to embrace the flag which represents you."

Then, drawing towards him General Petit, who carried the standard, and who was an accomplished model of modest heroism, he pressed the standard and the general to his bosom, amid the cheers and tears of all present. He then sprang into his carriage with moistened eyes, having touched the hearts even of the commissioners, sent to accompany him.

His journey at first proceeded slowly. General Drouot went

first in a carriage. Napoleon followed in his, accompanied by General Bertrand; the commissioners of the Powers came next. During the first stages, the cavalry of the guard accompanied the cortège. Further on, the detachments having retired, the cortège proceeded without escort. In the early part of the journey, and even in the midst of the Bourbonnais, Napoleon was received with acclamations by the people, who, though detesting the conscription and the *droits réunis*, saw in him the unhappy hero and the valiant defender of his native land. Whilst the crowd surrounded his carriage crying: *Vive l'Empereur*, they pressed round that of the commissioners, exclaiming *à bas les etrangers*. Napoleon several times apologized to the foreign commissioners for manifestations of feeling that it was not in his power to prevent, but which proved however that he was not so unpopular throughout France as certain persons had asserted. In general, he conversed freely and gently with the functionaries he met on the route, received their adieus, and offered his, with perfect calmness.

The journey soon became painful. In the environs of Moulins the cries of *Vive l'Empereur* ceased, *Vive le roi! Vivent les Bourbons* were heard. Between Moulins and Lyon, the people only exhibited curiosity, without adding any more significant demonstration. Napoleon had always had many partizans at Lyon, on account of what he had done for their city and manufacturers; still there was a portion of the population who professed entirely opposite sentiments. In order to avoid all open manifestations, the cortège passed through Lyon by night. Some cries of *Vive l'Empereur* were heard, and these were the last that saluted Napoleon's ears. Passing through Valence, Napoleon met Marshal Augereau who had just published an infamous proclamation, drawn up, it is said, by the Duke of Otranto, and concluding with these words—"Soldiers, you are released from your oaths; you are released by the nation, in whom the sovereign power resides; you are released, if more were needed, by the abdication of a man, who after having immolated millions of victims to his insatiable ambition, *has not known how to die like a soldier.*" Poor Augereau was still further from knowing how to die like a soldier; he had not exposed himself to death on the Saône and Rhone, where he had contributed by his weakness and incapacity to ruin the affairs of France. Napoleon, who knew nothing of Augereau's proclamation, but who was well acquainted with his unfortunate campaign, did not make him any reproach; he received him with indulgent familiarity, and even embraced him at parting. Advancing towards the south, the cries of *Vive le roi*, became more frequent, and to these were added—*à bas le tyran! A mort le tyran!* At Orange, especially, the cries were reiterated with violence. At Avignon, the excited population, wildly demanded that "the Corsican" should be delivered to them, that they might tear him in pieces and throw him into the Rhône. Whilst the populace treated thus the man of genius, guilty indeed, but covered with glory, who had so long represented in his own person, the prosperity and the great-

ness of France, they shouted—*Vivent les Allies!* around the carriage of the commissioners. Still the popular favour shown to foreigners was at the moment fortunate, as but for this popularity, Napoleon with his throat cut, might have anticipated in the waters of the Rhone, the unfortunate Marshal Brune. All the efforts of the commissioners, magistrates, and the police, were needed to prevent the commission of a horrible crime. Information was received that a vast multitude was assembled at Orgon, and that violence might be expected. These excited populations, exasperated by the conscription, the *droits réunis*, and by the long suspension of trade, were Royalists in 1814, as they had been Terrorists in 1793, and only wanted an opportunity to exhibit the same sanguinary spirit again. The commissioners, upon whom lay so heavy a responsibility, saw no other means of escaping the danger than by inducing Napoleon to assume a disguise. He accordingly put on a foreign uniform, and passed for one of the officers composing the cortège. This humiliation, the most painful he had undergone, had been, we may remember, present to his mind, when he swallowed the poison prepared by Dr. Yvan; but however painful it might be to assume the disguise, it was indispensably necessary. When the cortège reached the little town of Orgon, the people, armed with a gibbet, appeared calling for the tyrant, and threw themselves on the imperial carriage, intending to open it by force. General Bertrand alone was inside, and his life might have been sacrificed to the fury excited against his master, but that M. de Schouvaloff springing from his carriage and addressing the multitude in French, which, like all Russians, he spoke remarkably well, endeavoured to awaken in the minds of the exasperated crowd, the sentiments that a conquered man and a prisoner ought to inspire. As to the rest, his Russian uniform was of more service to M. de Schouvaloff than his eloquent speech, and he succeeded in calming the most excited of the mob. At the succeeding stages, the demonstration of violence gradually diminished, and they entirely ceased as the cortège approached the sea.

During these severe trials Napoleon remained motionless and silent, affecting a sovereign contempt for what was going on; but he could not be insensible to the reiterated cries of public hate, and he once actually melted into tears. He recovered himself quickly, and endeavoured to reassume a haughty impassability, but he could not help discerning, amid the baseness of these demonstrations, that slow but infallible justice, which would be disgusting to contemplate if we only considered it in the vile instruments it employs, but which, if we raise our eyes to the source, appears as profound as terribly avenging. There remains to the great minds who have provoked this avenging power only one honour, one consolation—that is to acknowledge, to comprehend, and resign themselves to its decrees. After having shed, not through wickedness of heart, but through excess of ambition, more blood than any Asiatic conqueror had ever poured forth, Napoleon felt, without saying it, that he de-

served the violent execrations of the multitude. Alas! this many-headed multitude has often trailed in bloody mire sages and virtuous heroes, who had only merited applause; and it must be confessed that if the popular outcry was never more insulting than on the present occasion, it had often been more unjust.

This punishment was terrible, but happily short. Napoleon found at the Gulf of Saint Raphaël an English frigate, "The Undaunted," which Colonel Campbell, the English commissioner, had ordered to be prepared. He embarked on the 28th April for the isle of Elba, and cast anchor on the 3rd May in the road of Porto-Ferrajo. On the morrow, the 4th, he disembarked amid the joyous shouts of a population, proud of having for their sovereign this monarch, who had fallen from the highest throne of the universe, bringing with him, as they said, immense treasures, and about to inundate the Isle with benefits. Thus, to indemnify him for the homage of the universe, he received the acclamations of some thousand islanders, who were either fishermen or miners. Empty and cruel comedy of human life! Napoleon, lord of the great empire that had extended from Rome to Lubeck, Napoleon was now the enthusiastically-received monarch of the Isle of Elba.

CONCLUSION.

In beholding this wondrous reign finish so disastrously, reflections crowd upon the mind suggested by the greatness, the variety and strange character of the events! Let us pause on these reflections before closing our recital: they may tend to our instruction, and to that of future generations.

The republican government in 1795 had ceased to be sanguinary, without, however, renouncing the spirit of persecution, and had imposed peace on Spain, Prussia, and Northern Germany, and remained engaged in war with Austria and England, a war kept up, so to speak, through habit, by means of admirable soldiers, and excellent, but disunited generals, when there suddenly appeared in the army of the Alps a young artillery officer, of small stature, shy but haughty expression of face, striking but eccentric turn of mind, alternately taciturn or lavishly loquacious, one moment disgraced under the Republic, and then banished into the *bureaux* of the Directory, where he attracted attention by his just and profound opinions on every phase of the war, which procured him the command of Paris on the 13th Vendémiaire, and soon after the command of the troops in Italy. Reappearing suddenly amongst the army as Commander-in-Chief, he immediately impressed an extraordinary momentum on events, crossed the Alps, whose feet only had been touched by any previous general, invaded Lombardy, turned the

tide of war in that direction, conquered in succession the different armies of Austria, tired out her patience, forced her to acknowledge our conquests, and obliged her to subscribe to the immense losses she had sustained. He thus gave peace to the Continent, and his astonishing deeds he expressed in language entirely new by its originality and grandeur, a language that may be called military eloquence. That this extraordinary young man should appear like a meteor on this disturbed and bloody horizon, without attracting every eye and chaining every heart, would have been impossible. Even had France been ice-cold, which she never was, she would have been captivated. She was bewitched, and the entire world with her.

Of all the powers, to whom the Revolution had thrown down the gauntlet, one only remained to be conquered. This was England. Sitting aloof, upon her own element, inaccessible to us as we to her, it might have been believed that she never could become either victor or vanquished. The Directory, looking for occupation for the conqueror of Italy, and believing him to be not only the greatest captain of the century, but the most fruitful in resources, commissioned him to surmount the physical difficulties that separate us from our eternal rival. Young Bonaparte being appointed general of the Ocean Army, did not find the preparations made to cross the Straits of Dover sufficient for the purpose, and led on by his powerful imagination, he determined to attack England in the East. It was he that suggested the expedition to Egypt, crossed the Mediterranean, before Nelson's eyes, with five hundred sail, took Malta *en passant*, disembarked at the foot of Pompey's Pillar, conquered the Mamelukes at the Pyramids, the Janissaries at Aboukir, and, having become master of Egypt, abandoned himself during some months to wonder-picturing dreams, which embraced at the same time both the East and the West. Learning suddenly that, thanks to its anarchical nature, the Directory had been engaged in a fresh war, which, through incapacity, was badly managed, General Bonaparte abandoned Egypt, crossed the sea a second time, and by his sudden appearance, surprised and delighted France, that was plunged in desolation. He had not been more prompt to covet the supreme power than France was to offer it; for, seeing his mode of directing war, administering conquered provinces, in a word, his manner of managing everything, France had recognized in him a great political as well as a great military chief. Having become First Consul, he signed, within two years, a continental peace at Luneville, a naval peace at Amiens, tranquillized La Vendée, reconciled the Church to the French Revolution, re-established religion, gave peace to France and to Europe, and allowed the wearied world to breathe after twelve years of blood-spilling strife. In recompense for so many prodigies, he was invested in 1802 with supreme power for life, and he continued to win universal admiration by his efforts to reconstitute France and Europe.

Who could prevent such a man remaining in quiet, and peace-

fully enjoying the happiness he had procured others and himself? Some penetrating minds, seeing his devouring activity, experienced a kind of involuntary terror; but the generation of that time gave themselves up to him, with blind confidence; and, indeed, it would be difficult, in listening to this young man, to doubt his profound wisdom. There was not a single event of the terrible French Revolution that had not deeply penetrated his mind, and added largely to his knowledge of human nature. He spoke of regicide, and the effusion of human blood, with horror. He considered party spirit a wild and detestable manifestation, and wished to put an end to it, by tranquillizing Vendée, and recalling the emigrants. He condemned the assumption of the French Revolution, that wished to have exclusive control in religious matters, without setting any value on the Pontifical authority; it was alike tyrannical for individual consciences, and dangerous for the State. Napoleon, after having arranged with the Pope, again opened the churches, and attended mass, in presence of the angry revolutionists. He had a horror of disordered finances, paper money, bankruptcy, and treated with contempt these flatterers of the populace who had abolished indirect taxation. Besides, in eloquent diatribes against Mr. Pitt, inserted in the *Moniteur*, he decried war, which was his profession, his glory, his power, and said he would be very glad if Mr. Pitt and his adherents were sent to bivouac on blood-stained battle-fields, or to cruize day and night amid ocean tempests, and learn what war really was. Lastly, what bitter raillery did he not pour forth against the inventors of a universal Republic, who wished to submit all Europe to a single power, and, moreover, wished to model this government on an imaginary type, drawn from their own brain! Who could teach anything to this young man, so well instructed by the events of the French Revolution? Alas! he was so wise, so thoughtful, when called upon to judge the passions of others, but when it became necessary to resist his own, what was he?

Now, the young Consul possessed everything his heart could desire, and satisfied every hope the world had formed of him. His power was limitless, in virtue not only of the laws, but of the adhesion of the nation. He was invested with supreme power for life, which ought to be sufficient for a man who was a husband, but not a father; he had also the privilege of choosing his successor, a privilege that allowed him to consult at the same time the interest of the public and gratify his personal affections. As to France, she had, thanks to the revolution and to him, a position, which she had never held before, and which she was never again to hold, even when she commanded from Cadiz to Lubeck. Her frontiers were the Alps, the Rhine, the Scheldt; in fact, all that she could wish for the maintenance of her safety and her power, for acquisitions beyond these limits, were contrary to the indications of nature and the principles of sound policy. France had emancipated Italy to the Adage, taking care to indemnify in Germany

the Austrian princes who formerly had *apanages* in Italy. Acknowledging the necessity of the papal authority in matters of faith and its high utility in politics, France had restored the Pope, who was indebted to her for the safety and respect he enjoyed, and from her he expected the restoration of all his states. France wisely despised the powerless anger of the Neapolitan Bourbons. She had arranged the affairs of Switzerland with admirable wisdom. Recognising both the great and little cantons, the aristocratic and democratic cantons, because all existed, obliging them to live in peace and on terms of equality, abolishing the subjection of classes, and territorial subjection, in a word, putting in execution in the Alps, the principles of 1789, without outraging nature, whose laws are always invincible, she gave, in the act of mediation, the model of all the future constitutions of Switzerland. But it was in Germany especially that the profound wisdom of the Consular policy was most eminently displayed. There were German princes, stripped of their states by the cession of the left bank of the Rhine to France; there were Austrian princes stripped of their patrimony by the emancipation of Italy. The first Consul never thought of leaving either without compensation, or allowing Germany to remain unorganized. The French revolution had already established in France the principal of secularisation by the alienation of ecclesiastical property, and extending the principle to Germany, getting it recognized there, furnished ample means of indemnifying the deposed princes. With what remained of the states of the archbishops of Treves, of Mayence, of Cologne, and, with those of some other ecclesiastical princes, the First Consul collected wherewith to indemnify all the royal families that had suffered loss, and maintain in Germany a sage equilibrium. After having judiciously combined the indemnities and influences in the Confederation, after having secured suitable pensions to the deposed ecclesiastical princes, he maturely arranged his plan, and not having at that time adopted the principle of writing treaties with his sword alone, he associated in his work, Prussia, who was induced to assist through motives of interest, Russia, through self-love, and Austria, influenced by the example of the two other powers. By these means he succeeded in procuring the adoption of the *recez* of 1803, a master-piece of practical and profound policy. This *recez*, in fact, without involving us too deeply in German affairs, re-established in Germany, order, peace and content, and placed in our hands the balance of the Germanic interests. It also prepared for us the only alliance at that time desirable and possible, that of Prussia. France was at that moment so powerful, so dreaded, that with the alliance of one continental state she was certain of the submission of the others, and the continent, once submissive, England would be obliged to devour in silence her vexation at seeing her rival so great. Such an alliance France could at that time only form with Prussia. Austria having lost the

Low Countries, Suabia, almost the entire of Italy, and the ecclesiastical principalities, which constituted her clientèle in Germany, was in Europe the great victim of the French Revolution, and this was an inevitable calamity. A sound policy pointed out that it would be better to humour her, even indemnify her for her losses, if possible, but at the same time showed that it would be impossible to convert her either into a friend or an ally. Russia's alliance was to be purchased only at the expense of fearful concessions in the East. With her, it was necessary to keep up courtesy without intimacy, and avoid as much as possible all actual business. Prussia alone remained, with whom, it was easy to come to an understanding. This Power, gorged with church property, was ardently desirous of more, and was become, what in France was called *un acquereur de biens nationaux*. By treating Austria with respect, by showing her favour, and never pushing her to extremities, France was sure of her support. Her prudent and honest monarch was delighted with the policy of the First Consul and sought his friendship. A union with Prussia consequently assured us the submission of the entire continent and the resignation of haughty England. The First Consul had forced the latter, in subscribing to the peace of Amiens, to acknowledge our conquests, and that, which she most disliked, the conquest of Antwerp. With regard to England only one difficulty remained to be overcome, it was by humouring to induce her to pardon us all the glory we had acquired in a few years, and this was possible, for the English admired the First Consul with all the vivacity of British enthusiasm, which at least equals that of the Parisians. A word of flattery from his lips, emanating from the height of his genius, which was elevated as the most exalted throne in the world, would be sure to touch to the quick the heart of haughty Albion. It was possible that this flattery might not always be repaid with flattery; on the pinnacle of glory, to which he had attained, some English orators, or some emigrant journalists might insult him, but he could well afford to despise their insolence, and leave to the world, to the English nation itself, the task of avenging him.

There remained still another Power, formerly of considerable importance, but, at the period of which we speak, lamentably fallen, we mean Spain, still under the sceptre of the Bourbons, but fallen into such a state of disintegration, and in this state so prostrate at the feet of the First Consul, that one word sent from Paris to poor Charles IV., or the wretched Godoy, was sufficient to govern her. And, allowing this work of disintegration to advance, it was evident that Spain would soon be obliged to ask from the First Consul, not only a system of policy, which she had already done, but a government, perhaps a king.

What, then, had he to wish more for himself, or for France, he, the happy mortal, who had become her head? Nothing but to

persevere in this policy, which was that of force rendered supportable by moderation. No man ever enjoyed so many diverse species of glory as the conqueror of Rivoli, of the Pyramids, of Marengo—the author of the Concordat, of the treaties of Lunéville and Amiens, of the act of Swiss Mediation, of the *recez* of the Diet of 1803, of the civil code, and of the recall of the emigrants. If one merit were wanted to complete the *fasces* of his merits, it was, perhaps, that he had not given liberty to France. But at that period the apprehension of political liberty, far from being a pretext for degrading servility, was an insurmountable principle. To the generation of 1800, liberty was only another name for the scaffold, for schism, for the Vendean war, for bankruptcy, for confiscation. The only species of liberty at that time suited to France was the moderation of a great man. But, alas! the moderation of a great man, endowed with unlimited power, even were he at the same time endowed with every gift of genius, is it not of all revolutionary chimeras, the most chimerical?

But mis-placed liberty produces as great evils as her total absence. This man, at that time so admirable, was, by the very fact of possessing absolute power, on the brink of an abyss. In fact, within a few months after the peace of Amiens had been signed, and when the first emotions of joy had subsided amongst the English, there arose before their eyes, like a mighty but importunately dazzling light, the greatness of France, unfortunately but little shaded in the person of the First Consul. Some flattering attentions offered to Mr. Fox, when he visited Paris, did not in the least detract from the attitude taken by the First Consul, as master, not only of the affairs of France, but of Europe. His language, sparkling with genius and redolent of ambition, offended the pride of the English; his devouring activity disturbed their peace. He sent an army to St. Domingo, which was certainly very allowable, but he publicly sent Colonel Sebastiani into Turkey, Colonel Savary into Egypt, and General Decaen into India, charged with missions of observation, which it would be very difficult to construe into scientific missions. These movements were more than sufficient to excite British suspicions. At this period, many emigrants, who persevered in remaining in England, notwithstanding the glory and clemency of the First Consul, put forth against him and his family many publications, which, a year before, would have been universally condemned in England, but for which an imprudent jealousy now procured a favourable reception, which the spirit of the laws did not interdict. These were certainly effusions that only deserved contempt, for what pinnacle could be higher than that on which the First Consul was placed, and from which he could look down on the insults of calumny? Alas, he descended from this glorious eminence to listen to pamphleteers, and abandoned himself to bursts of passion as violent as unworthy of him. To insult him, the philosopher, the conqueror,

what an unpardonable crime! As if in all times, and in every country, free or otherwise, genius, virtue, and beneficence, have not been insulted! No, torrents of blood should flow because pamphleteers, who every day insulted their own government, had insulted a stranger, certainly a great man, but after all, only a man, and, moreover, the head of a rival nation!

From that moment the gauntlet was thrown down between the warrior who represented, in his own person, the French Revolution, and the English people, whose jealousy had not been sufficiently soothed. Only a few days and Malta would have been evacuated, but, by a singular fatality, it happened that at this moment, when all the British passions were excited, the First Consul exercising in Switzerland his dictatorial beneficence, sent an army to Berne. A weak-minded minister, pandering to British passions, found in this act a pretext for suspending the evacuation of Malta. If the First Consul had had patience, if he had insisted firmly, but gently, the frivolity of the motive would not have long opposed a hindrance to the solemnly-promised evacuation of the great Mediterranean fortress. But the First Consul, influenced not alone by a feeling of wounded pride, but of resentment for outraged justice, demanded the execution of treaties, "for," he said, "no power shall, with impunity, fail in a promise made to France or to me." Everybody remembers the sadly-heroic scene with Lord Whitworth and the rupture of the peace of Amiens. The First Consul vowed from that moment to perish, or to punish England. Fatal vow! The emigrants, we mean those that were irreconcilable, did not limit themselves to writing, they conspired. The First Consul, discovering with his penetrating glance, plots that the police were unable to detect, pounced upon the conspirators, and, believing that he discovered princes amongst them, and not being able to seize those whom he considered the real criminals, he went into the heart of Germany, caring little for the rights of nations, to arrest the descendant of the Condés. He ordered him to be shot without pity, and he, the severe reprover of the 20th January, equalled, as far as he could, the crime of regicide, and seemed to experience a kind of satisfaction in committing the crime in the face of Europe, in contempt and defiance of public opinion. The prudent Consul had become suddenly a madman, labouring under two species of mania: the anger of the offended man, who only breathes vengeance, and the anger of the conqueror, voluntarily braving enemies that he is certain to conquer. Afterwards, in order to brave his enemies more effectually, and satisfy his ambition at the same time as his anger, he placed the imperial crown on his head. Europe, at once offended and alarmed, saw France and her ruler in a new light. At the sound of the fusillade of Vincennes, Prussia, who had formed a solemn alliance with France, drew back, became silent, and renounced an intimacy that had ceased to be honourable. Austria, more calculating, made no display of feeling, but profitted of the opportunity to keep no

measure in the execution of the *recez* of 1803. The young Emperor of Russia, Alexander, honest, and full of honor, alone dared, as guarantee of the Germanic constitution, to demand an explanation of the violation of the Baden territory. Napoleon replied by an insulting allusion to the death of Pius I. The Czar held his peace, wounded to the heart, and determined to avenge the insult. Thus Prussia, chilled in friendship—Austria encouraged in her excesses—Russia insulted—all became auxiliary, from different motives, to the commencement of our struggle with England.

The Boulogne expedition was prepared. Napoleon might have slowly organized his navy, and directed remote expeditions against the English colonies, leaving the continent, which was ill-disposed, but intimidated, in peace; he might then have waited until his expeditions should have caused some sensible injury to England; until our corsaires should have harassed her commerce, and she should be wearied of a war in which we could do little against her, but in which she could do nothing against us, our traffic being at that time exclusively continental.

But this powerful genius, the greatest conqueror of physical difficulties that perhaps ever existed, wished to fight England hand to hand, and in this he was right; for, could any one pass the Straits of Dover with a powerful army, he was most certainly the man. To the genius of profound political combinations, he joined the fulminating genius of war; to these he added, in an especial manner, the prestige that fascinates soldiers and disconcerts the enemy; and he could, having accomplished the miracle of crossing the strait, effect a second miracle, that of terminating the war at a single blow. His preparations, though never put into execution, will be for military men and legislators enduring monuments of his capabilities of resource. But see the value of innate disposition! This man, who had the greatest of all difficulties to conquer, that of crossing the sea with an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men, and who, consequently, needed that the Continent should be perfectly tranquil—this daring man, having gone to Milan to assume the Italian crown, declared, on his own authority, that Genoa should be reunited to the Empire. The European Coalition was again immediately formed. Russia, deeply hurt by the insults she had received from the First Consul, and also offended by the naval pretensions of England, thought to act as mediatrix, and could not help demanding the evacuation of Malta. But when the annexation of Genoa was made known, she discontinued her demands, and joining with England and Austria, she gave her armies the order to march, hoping to be joined on her route by the Prussians, who had been restrained until now by the prudence and moderation of their King. Thus he, who had been the sage peacemaker in 1803, was now become the incitor of a general war, merely because he had not been able to subdue his passions.

But he, like Alexander or Cæsar, was a man of genius, and genius is forgiven much and long by Fortune. The threats of the Con-

tinent did not interrupt the preparations for his great expedition; it failed in consequence of the Admiral's fault, and fortunately—for had he embarked at the same time that the Austrian army was passing the Inn, it is very possible that whilst he was opening for himself a road to London, the Austrians would have advanced towards Paris. However that may have been, when his expedition was necessarily deferred, he advanced like a lion that springs from one enemy to another, and in a few days, hastening from Boulogne to Ulm, from Ulm to Austerlitz, he overwhelmed Austria and Russia, and then saw Prussia, that was about joining the rest of Europe, fall at his feet, and implore mercy from the conqueror of the Coalition.

Henceforth the war with England was changed into a continental war, which, indeed, would not have been a disadvantage, had the political affairs been as well directed as the military. In taking up arms for England, the continental powers provided us the battle-field we needed—a battle-field that gave us Austerlitz and Ulm, instead of Trafalgar. There was, consequently, no reason to complain. But when they had been well beaten and convinced of the folly of their efforts, they should have been treated in a manner that would have deprived them of all desire to recommence the strife. Austria ought to have been punished, but not driven to despair —nay, she ought even to have been consoled, as a means of compensating her for her great losses, could an indemnification be found. Russia ought to have been left in her confusion, and the powerlessness resulting from distance, without making or asking concessions; and, lastly, Prussia ought neither to be punished for her faults nor ridiculed for her unsuccessful mediation—it would have been better to make her feel the danger of yielding to the passions of coteries, and she ought to have been definitely attached by giving her some of the *optimæ spoliæ* of victory. Then our victorious arms could be turned against England, deprived of her allies, terrified at her isolation, assailed by our corsairs, and threatened by a formidable invasion, reason declares, and facts prove, that she would not have waited until her conquered allies had signed their treaties, to propose to treat herself. It would have been an extension of the peace of Amiens.

After Ulm and Austerlitz Napoleon was in a position to realize in Europe the wise and profound policy of separating the continent from England, and thus forcing the latter to make peace. Austria, accustomed to warfare during five years, three at least of which were against us, seeing foreign armies advance in two months as far as Vienna and Brunn, losing whole armies in one day, reduced to laying down her arms like Mack, was no longer inclined to resist us, provided she was not driven to the last degree of despair. The young Emperor of Russia, who, at the head of Souvarof's soldiers, had hoped to act a very important part, and had been reduced to play a very humiliating one, had fallen into extreme dejection. Prussia, that with two hundred thousand soldiers of the great Frederick, had gone to dictate the law at Vienna, finding us in a

position to give laws to the entire world, presented an alarmed and almost ridiculous appearance. How easy, how becoming, how wise it would have been to be generous to such enemies!

We have already said why it would have been impossible to make a friend of Austria, but though she could not be made an ally of France at that time, it was not wise to add unnecessarily to her causes of vexation, and change them into implacable hatred. As a compensation for the loss of the Low Countries, of Suabia, the Milanese, and the *clientèle* of the Ecclesiastical States, she might have been given the Venetian States. It was harsh to deprive her of them. However, they were taken from Austria, because warfare cannot be an inexpensive game to those with whom it originates; and indeed the freedom of Italy could not with decency be alleged as a motive, when we ourselves had taken Piedmont, and converted Lombardy into an apanage for the Bonaparte family. But to deprive Austria of every seaport, as Napoleon did then, in taking from her Venice, Trieste, and Illyria, and shut her up in her continental possessions, was treating her with a rigour that was without real advantage for us, and only calculated to drive her to despair. But not stopping there, but depriving her besides of the Tyrol, Vorarlberg, and the remains of Suabia, in order to enrich Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and Baden, unimportant and unfaithful allies, who only aided that they might betray us, this was only rendering her implacable. To treat people in this way is like attempting their death, and if we do not kill them, we prepare for ourselves enemies, who at the first opportunity will stab us in the back, and their conduct cannot excite wonder.

Depriving Austria of the Venetian States was, we repeat, harsh, and yet it was the almost inevitable result of the third coalition. It would have been good policy to compensate her for this inevitable rigour. It would have been easy, according to the fashion in which the world was treated then, to send her towards the East, and give her the Danubian provinces. Had this been done, the fate of Europe would have been changed, and Austria placed upon the Danube, her true position, would have gained more than she had lost, would have always protected Constantinople, and would have been for ever at enmity with Russia. This would have been, without doubt, a very dictatorial proceeding; but as these provinces were afterwards given to Russia, it would most assuredly have been better to have gratified Austria at this moment. Russia might have taken it ill, but that would have been her punishment for interfering in this war. As to the Turks, incapable of comprehending the service that had been done them, they would not have interfered, and Austria would certainly have accepted the Danubian provinces, for her only thought was to obtain compensation, no matter how, which indeed she carried so far as to demand Hanover for the dispossessed Archdukes—Hanover, the patrimony of her ally, England.

Far from thinking of compensation, Napoleon only thought of stripping her, of turning her into ridicule, and making her a victim

even longer than was necessary. He took away, then, without compensation, and independently of the Venetian States, Illyria, the Tyrol, Volarlberg, and the remains of Suabia. In general, punishment is inflicted to destroy the will to offend, but here, far from removing the desire, it was excited to passion in the breast of Austria. Towards Prussia, Napoleon entertained but one sentiment—to make her the subject of jest. In truth, she supplied the materials! The Czar, through the influence of a thoughtless nobility and a beautiful and imprudent queen, had induced the King of Prussia to declare war, and his ambassador, M. de Haugwitz, coming to Vienna on the eve of the battle of Austerlitz to dictate the law, and receiving it on his knees on the morrow, was, indeed, one of those comic spectacles that the world sometimes presents. But if it is ever permitted to laugh at the ridiculous in human events, it is when we are spectators, not directors of the scene. Napoleon had all the caprices of power: he would do as he pleased, and amuse himself besides; that was too much, a hundred times too much!

Austria asking Hanover for her archdukes, inspired Napoleon with an idea, which he thought most piquant, that of presenting the spoils of England to her allies. But instead of giving Hanover to Austria, he gave it to Prussia. This may have been more conformable to geographical unity, but it was contrary to sound policy. Far from laughing at Prussia he ought, on the contrary, to have pitied her false position. She had always desired to obtain possession of Hanover, but being induced through the error of her Court to join in the excitement of Europe against France, it was placing her in a cruel position to force her to accept Hanover at this moment, and only excited in her already anxious mind a conflict between avidity and honor. Without doubt, it is something, it is even a great deal, to satisfy men's interests; but it is nothing, if, at the same time, we humiliate them; for, happily, there is as much pride as avidity in the human heart. To humble Prussia in enriching her, was not making her an ally,—it was making her ungrateful, and her ingratitude would be proportionate to her honesty.

Napoleon offered Hanover to Prussia, with the sword at her throat. "Hanover or war," he seemed to say to M. d'Haugwitz—who indeed did not hesitate, and chose Hanover. Napoleon did not stop there, but made her pay for this unwelcome gift, by sacrificing the Marquisate of Anspach, and the Duchy of Berg, so that he lessened the value of his gift without lessening the shame of its acceptance. This was a serious mistake, for it was making war with England interminable. In fact, it was impossible that old George III. would ever consent to give up the patrimony of his family, and the English kings had, at that time, an influence in the monarchical republic of England that they no longer possess. M. de Haugwitz, who had left Potsdam for Schœnbrunn, amidst the applauses of the court, in order to give the law to France, and declare war for the advantage of England, now returned to Berlin,

after receiving the law from France, and laden with the richest of British spoils. What must have been the excitement of an honest king, of a proud nation, and of a vain and impassioned court!

Thus Napoleon, instead of deriving from his incomparable victory at Austerlitz a continental and maritime peace, a double peace which he might easily have secured by discouraging and alienating the allies of England, had oppressed some, humbled others, and left a desperate war as the only resource to all. He had even created an invincible obstacle to peace by giving Hanover to Prussia.

All the arrangements at Vienna in 1806 were mistakes, and Napoleon did not even confine himself to these serious errors. When he returned to Paris, he abandoned himself to an intoxication of ambition, unparalleled in modern times. He planned then an immense empire, supported by vassal kingdoms, which should rule Europe, and which should be designated by a name consecrated by the Romans and Charlemagne, "THE EMPIRE OF THE WEST." Napoleon had already prepared two vassal kingdoms, in the Cisalpine Republic converted into a kingdom of Italy, and in the kingdom of Naples, which had been taken from the Bourbons, and given to his brother Joseph. To these he added Holland, which had been changed from a republic to a monarchy and given to his brother Louis. But this was not all. The Empire of the West to be complete, should embrace Germany. Napoleon had made allies there; the princes of Bavaria, of Wurtemberg, and of Baden. He had abandoned to them the spoils of Austria, of Prussia, and of the unsecularised ecclesiastical princes, gave them up the *noblesse immédiate*, made them kings, and asked in marriage for his brothers, adopted children, and lieutenants, princesses of these houses, and his alliance was eagerly accepted. Germany had not yet recovered from the confusion caused by the system of secularisation, and was still in an extraordinary state of disorder in consequence of the many questions that yet remained to be decided. The sovereign princes who remained electors or had become kings, pillaged the property of the nobility and of the church, and did not pay the pensions of the deposed ecclesiastical princes, and all the oppressed, in their despair, invoked, not conquered Austria or ridiculed Prussia, but he who was the master of fate—Napoleon. This universal appeal to him excited the idea of a new Germanic Confederation, which should be called "The Confederation of the Rhine," and should be placed under the protection of Napoleon. It was composed of Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Baden, Nassau, and all the princes of the south of Germany. Thus, the Emperor of the West, Mediator of Switzerland, Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine, Suzerain of the kingdoms of Naples, Italy, and Holland needed only to join Spain to his vassal states, to be more powerful than Charlemagne. Such were the projects that the fumes of pride had excited in the vast brain of Napoleon.

In such a state of disintegration, Francis II. not being able

to retain the title of Emperor of Germany, resigned it, and was thenceforth called Emperor of Austria. This was the most humiliating degradation after his territorial losses. Prussia being also expelled from the old Germanic Confederation drew around her the princes of the north of Germany, and thus became the head of a little third-rate Germany. She asked permission to form this Confederacy, which was coldly granted with the secret determination to discourage those who may be tempted to join her. This was injury upon injury, both for Austria, that should have been punished without being driven to despair, and for Prussia, that should have been won by helping her interests and protecting her honour. In fact, it was the most delusive of all policies to interfere to such a degree in German affairs. In the middle ages, Germany, not being able to arrive at unity, had stood still at the federative state. These states, whilst they preserved their independance, had entered into a Confederation to defend themselves against their powerful neighbours, and of course against France, the most powerful of all. This was met by France by a policy as natural as it was lawful. Profitting of the jealousy of the Germans, she supported the petty princes against the great, and Prussia against Austria. But, abandoning traditional and legitimate policy, and creating a Germanic Confederation, which would not be German, but French, which would burden us with the affairs of the Germans, and expose us to all their hatred, which would give us allies to-day, who would be traitors to-morrow, was the madness of ambition and nothing else. In every country in which a traditional policy exists, this policy has an appointed aim, towards which it always proceeds with greater or less speed according to the circumstances of the times. To proceed a step on this path is only to advance in the natural order of things. To advance more than one step is imprudent, but endeavouring to reach the goal at once, we are sure to miss, by over-passing it. By the *recez* of 1803, Napoleon had approached as near as possible to the object of our traditional policy in Germany. By the Confederation of the Rhine he unfortunately overstepped it. His interference was to international law, what that of the Jacobins had been to social rights. They wished to remodel society, he wanted to remodel Europe. The guillotine had been their instrument; cannon was his. His remedy was infinitely less odious, and was, besides, surrounded by the prestige of glory. It was not a whit wiser.

Such were the fruits of the great victory of Austerlitz. Spite of these errors the fact of the victory still remained dazzling, overwhelming. Russia utterly broken down, England terrified by her isolation, wished for peace, and nothing would be easier than to conclude one with these two powers. In letting these opportunities pass, Napoleon put the acmé to his errors.

Touching the mouths of the Cattaro, which the Austrians had perfidiously given up to the Russians, instead of giving them to us, the Czar sent M. d'Oubril to Paris. As Austria and Prussia had

negociated directly with France, the Czar refused to interfere in their concerns. Russia had constituted herself the patron of two royal familes—Savoy and the Neapolitan Bourbons. She was desirous of obtaining Sardinia for the one, and Sicily for the other. On these conditions she was ready to sanction all Napoleon had done. England had passed from the hands of Pitt to those of Fox. It was a most favourable moment to conclude the maritime peace. Fox had sent Lords Yarmouth and Lauderdale to Paris. England wished to keep Malta and the Cape; and on condition of obtaining this concession, she would allow us to overturn Europe as we had done, but she, too, wished that Sicily should be given to the Neapolitan Bourbons, and Sardinia to the house of Savoy. Thus the continent of Europe would belong to the Bonaparte family, to which it had already furnished apanages, and the two large Italian islands would be given as indemnity to the two ancient deposed families. On such terms, the great Empire of the West, such as it had been constituted, would have been accepted both by Russia and England. A treaty may be well commenced on such a basis, but pride and a want of foresight (a rare fault in Napoleon), prevented so important a result.

Napoleon wished to treat separately with England and Russia, that he might the more effectively dictate to them. They yielded to his wish, in a certain degree, through their desire for peace. M. d'Oubril negotiated on the one side, Lords Yarmouth and Lauderdale on the other, but with a secret understanding. By terrifying M. d'Oubril, Napoleon induced him to sign a separate treaty, by which, instead of Sicily the Bourbons of Naples should have the Balearic Isles, for which Spain would receive a compensation. England was alarmed at this, and now or never was the time to conclude a peace with her, when she was terrified at her isolation. Napoleon thought it more clever to await the ratification of the Russian treaty, flattering himself that he could then do as he pleased with England. Meantime, Mr. Fox died. England succeeded in preventing the ratification of the Russian treaty, and thus the opportunity of peace was lost. An over-refined policy is legitimate, but on condition that it succeeds. When it fails, it only gains for those who were deceived, the reputation of foxes taken in a snare.

However, peace was not yet absolutely impossible. At this moment the fermentation which Napoleon had caused in Prussia had attained its height. Divided between Hanover and honour, Prussia was terribly agitated, and violently excited against him who had reduced her to this alternative. In addition, two pieces of intelligence following quick on each other, drove her to despair. On the one side she thought she could perceive that France secretly discouraged the princes of the north of Germany from entering into a confederacy with her, which, indeed, was true to a certain degree, but which the Elector of Hesse exaggerated even to calumny; on the other hand, she learned that Napoleon was willing to restore Hanover to the royal family of England in order to obtain a naval

peace. He had not said so, but had allowed it to be understood, and, indeed, it was his intention to make a new arrangement with Prussia; to restore her Anspach and Berg, and take back Hanover declaring that it was on such terms alone that the peace of the world could be secured. But he did wrong in differing this frank avowal. Prussia considered that she was trifled with, turned into ridicule, and rated as a third-rate power, and in consequence her agitation turned into rage. Napoleon let her speak and act as she would, thinking it beneath his dignity to give an explanation, which, perhaps, might have been quite satisfactory; but, as she drew her sword, he drew his. He was weary of hearing constantly of the soldiers of the great Frederick, whom he had not yet conquered,—and the Prussian war was the consequence. England and Russia naturally took part in the war, and that universal peace which Napoleon might have obtained by land and sea, together with the recognition of his imperial title and his immense empire, was now deferred until some new miracle should arise.

Napoleon's genius and the valour of his army had now reached the culminating point. In another month there was no longer either a Prussian monarchy or a Prussian army, and at the sight of the North Sea the soldiers exclaimed* spontaneously "Long live the Emperor of the West." Their enthusiasm had divined his ambition. This caused him the greatest joy; but, however, he did not betray the secret desire he felt for so glorious a title. The Russians had advanced to the assistance of the Prussians. Napoleon hastened to meet them, drove them beyond the Vistula, and meeting Poland on his way, conceived the idea of restoring her former greatness, without considering whether it might not be as difficult to resuscitate a State as an individual. He was excited against the Russians and only thought how he could most annoy them, or do them an injury. He fought bloody battles at Czarnowo, and Pultusk, and at Eylau, where he had his first experience of the northern climate, and of the despair of peoples, before which he was afterwards to yield. He performed prodigies of valour and skill, during a winter passed upon the ice. When spring at length arrived, he fought and won the battle of Friedland, the greatest perhaps that was ever fought, both from the promptitude displayed, the profound skill of the combinations, and the importance of the results.

Alexander fell at his feet, as Francis II. and Frederick William had done before, and now the greatest conqueror of modern times paused, for he already felt an insecurity in his position. Alone at the extremity of the continent, surrounded by conquered states, and yet feeling the necessity of having some ally, Napoleon determined to seek the aid of his young conquered enemy. In fact, the Austrian alliance, which at this time was almost impossible,

* Our readers will undoubtedly remember, that at the capitulation of Prenzlow, Lannes' soldiers uttered this same cry, when they came in sight of the North Sea, Lannes wrote it to Napoleon, who made no remark.

became still more so in consequence of the severities that had followed on the battle of Austerlitz; the Prussian alliance had been allowed to slip away, and there now remained only the Russian. Napoleon, inconstant because he had no fixed principles, passed abruptly from one scheme of policy to another, carrying with him his young competitor, a prince fickle by nature. He then conceived the idea of two great empires, that should rule the world; one in the West, which was to be his, and one in the East, which was to be Alexander's, but his was to be the dominant power. He had an interview with the Czar on the raft at Tilsit, where he praised, flattered, and delighted him, and formed on the celebrated raft, an alliance with Russia. However, explanations would have been necessary, and as the alliance was to depend on mutual concessions, the extent of these concessions ought to be determined on. Napoleon was in a hurry, Alexander was charmed, they embraced and promised everything, but did not enter into any explanations. Alexander showed the desire he felt to take possession of Finland, to which Napoleon consented, for he had many reasons to be displeased with Sweden. Besides, Alexander showed all the desire of a young man with regard to the East. At the mention of Constantinople, Napoleon started, but restrained himself and allowed his new ally to indulge all the dreams his imagination might suggest. It was on such a basis that the union of two empires was to rest. The treaty was signed at Tilsit. Napoleon deprived Prussia of half her possessions, and only left her the other half at the entreaty of Alexander. Of a part of the Prussian states, and some sacrifices required from Alexander, Napoleon composed the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, which was given to the King of Saxony. This was a disturbing phantom for the Poles, and alarming to her co-spoliators. With the remainder of the Prussian spoils and the Electorate of Hesse, Napoleon composed the kingdom of Westphalia, destined for his brother Jerome. Saxony, increased by the Grand Duchy and the new kingdom of Westphalia, was to form part of the Confederation of the Rhine, which would thus extend as far as the Vistula. It would be impossible to bring together a greater number of contradictions. A Germany under a French Emperor and containing the French kingdom of Westphalia, the French Duchy of Berg (which had been conferred on Murat), Saxony, enlarged without desiring it, and Poland, half restored; not including half-ruined Prussia, nor Austria rendered miserable by the territory promised to Russia on the Danube; two Emperors at the extremities of this un-German Germany, the one of Russia, the other of France, promising each other the most inviolable friendship, provided that each allowed the other to do what he pleased, and taking very good care not to enter into any explanation lest they should not agree; the one dreaming of going to Constantinople, where his ally was determined not to let him enter, and the other having commenced the formation of a Poland, that his ally would not allow him to finish; and beyond the chaos, was England, hovering around these two allied empires with

one hundred ships and two hundred frigates, implacable England, that was determined to hasten the destruction of this monstrous edifice. Such was the system conceived at Tilsit on the morrow of the immortal victory of Friedland. What a political result from so great a military triumph!

Most assuredly, had Napoleon been capable of stopping and reflecting, in the midst of the torrent that bore him along, he might after Friedland, still better than after Austerlitz, return at once to the excellent policy of the Consulate, and find it completed, consolidated, having but one inconvenience, that of being too extended. The continent, which had been vanquished at Austerlitz, might be considered as conquered definitely, and without appeal at Friedland. The army of the great Frederick, which had been always cited to pique the pride of the conqueror of Marengo and Austerlitz, existed no longer. Distance, that protected Russia, as the strait of Dover protected England, had been surmounted. There was no longer any imaginable resistance on the continent. From the height of his universal rule Napoleon might raise up Prussia as though she had never been conquered, and restore her all her possessions except Hanover, which had been sacrificed to a naval peace. At that price he would have won the hearts of the Prussians, even the Queen's and Blucher's, and would have found in Prussia a firm ally, for by the lesson received at Jena, and the generous act which would have followed, there was no suggestion, English, Russian, or Austrian, that could have penetrated her ears or her heart. Reasoning on this hypothesis, Napoleon would have had nothing to ask from Alexander, except that as a punishment for his defeat the Danubian provinces should pass into the hands of Austria. The latter, compensated, would have been half appeased. In short, had he exercised a still higher degree of wisdom, Napoleon would have reconstituted Germany, in confederating her around Austria and Russia, skilfully balancing the one against the other; and even in neglecting this act of wisdom, he might, in preserving the ridiculous Confederation of the Rhine, cease to make new victims amongst the German princes; he might, for example, have pardoned the Elector of Hesse, and permitted Prussia to confederate Northern Germany around her. On these conditions Napoleon would have been truly master of the continent, and England, definitely isolated, would have demanded peace at any price. But we must admit, this is but a dream! There can be no resting place amid such a torrent. Napoleon, carried away by his passions and the course of events, overturning one state after another, forming and rejecting alliances, went to the banks of the Niemen to pick up the Russian alliance from the mud of Poland, and returned intoxicated with pride, ambition, and glory, and leaving behind him in despair Austria, Prussia, and Germany, whom he hoped to awe by an alliance with that Russia for whom he was preparing a Poland, and to whom he would not give Constantinople, nor even Bucharest nor Jassy! Should we be asked how a man endowed with so great a genius,

both military and political, could be guilty of such great errors, we ask in return how, though bringing into play such great talents and such generous sentiments, the French Revolution could have caused the sanguinary follies of 1793? And we reply, that it was because reason was put in abeyance, and passion allowed to assume the ascendant. But there is less excuse for Napoleon, for an individual ought to be more easily restrained than a multitude. Unfortunately experience proves that a man, carried away by pride, ambition, and the desire of conquest, is no more capable of restraint than the multitude itself.

At the return from Tilsit the preconcerted comedy was played. Russia, Prussia and Austria, under compulsion joined with France, and declared to England, that if she did not listen to the voice of her ancient allies, and still refused peace, they would unite against her in a general and destructive war,—a war especially directed against her commerce, by which they would close the ports of the continent against her. And certainly England would have yielded had such a declaration been made in the name of Prussia, restored by the generosity of Napoleon; of Austria, consoled by his policy; and of Russia, wearied by repeated defeats in carrying on war for the advantage of another. But England only laughed at a declaration torn from some by force, from others by an ephemeral union, and proudly defied the threats of this pretended European coalition. However, the continental blockade commenced. England had laid the continent under an interdict; Napoleon in his turn, did the same to the sea in closing all European ports, both to England and to those who would submit to her maritime laws. Of all the designs he had imagined during the campaign, this was the most important and the most efficacious. Had this interdict been maintained for some years, England might probably be induced to yield. Unfortunately the continental blockade only added to the exasperation of the countries that were obliged to submit to the demands of our policy, and Napoleon was preparing an immense compensation for England in abandoning to her the Spanish colonies.

His design on Spain was one of the causes that expedited Napoleon's proceedings at Tilsit. The throne of Philip V. had descended to the Bourbons. It was natural that in the impulse of his ambition, Napoleon should appropriate it to himself. Next to France, it was the fairest throne that could be appropriated by the Bonapartes, and the necessary completion of the Empire of the West. When this great Empire, already suzerain of Naples, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland, should have obtained the command of Spain, it would have nothing further to seek than the obedience of the peoples to this gigantic edifice. But it was not easy to find a pretext for such an annexation. Amongst the meannesses that at that time dishonored the royal family of Spain, its obedience to Napoleon may be considered as one. The good Charles IV. felt an unbounded admiration and devotion for the hero of the age. The nation itself, delighted that the First Consul had become Emperor, seemed only to ask his councils as their guide. How could war be

declared against such persons? Besides, the Spanish people were ardent, proud, young-spirited, and capable of immense resistance, which could not easily be overcome. Beneath the apparent weakness of the Spanish court, great difficulties were conceded. Perhaps by waiting, a solution of the difficulty might be found in the corruption of the court of Aranjuez. An honest king, but weak and imbecile in the extreme, such as are only found towards the extinction of a race, a shameless queen, a barefaced favourite dishonoring his master, a bad son, who wished to profit of these disorders to hasten his own succession, and an indignant people ready for any change that would deliver them from such an odious spectacle, offered favourable chances to an ambitious and all-powerful neighbour. It was possible that the Spanish court would sink beneath its own corruption and ask Napoleon for a king. He had already been asked for a wife for Ferdinand, and thus offered an indirect means of attaching Spain to the great Empire. But Napoleon cared for nothing indirect or remote. He wished to obtain possession of the crown of Spain fully, and immediately devised a series of plots, all tending to a universal revolt.

He had already invaded Portugal under pretence of closing it against England, and the Braganza family had fled to Brazil. This was a ray of light for him. He thought by assembling troops on the road to Lisbon, and directed towards Madrid, that the Bourbons would be terrified and fly, and that he could arrest them at Cadiz. Thanks to these machinations, the Spanish Court was about to fly, and the plot was on the point of succeeding, when the people, in indignation, hurried to Aranjuez, prevented the departure, nearly strangled Godoy, and proclaimed Ferdinand VII. king, who accepted the crown, snatched from his father. Napoleon, finding in this unnatural act a new excuse to replace that of which the people had deprived him, invited father and son to Bayonne, and there incited them against each other. The father raised his cane to strike his son, in Napoleon's presence, who uttered cries of indignation, and declared he had been treated with disrespect, made the father abdicate, because of his incapacity, and the son on account of his unworthiness, and then, in presence of Europe, disgusted at this spectacle, and of Spain, confounded and indignant, he dared to place the crown of Philip V. on the head of his brother Joseph, and transferred that of Naples to the weak and ambitious head of poor Murat. Thus commenced the fatal Spanish war, which, during six years, destroyed the finest armies of France, and prepared an impregnable battle-field for the English.

This last fault, once committed, its consequences immediately followed. Napoleon believed that eighty thousand conscripts, with a few officers from the dêpots, would be sufficient to bring the Spaniards to reason. But in such a climate, in presence of a popular insurrection, which could only be conquered by well-directed masses, and overcome by obstinate and daily battles, it was not conscripts that should have been employed. Baylen was the first punishment of a serious military error, and of a grave poli-

tical crime. This first act—resistance to the great empire—stirred all Europe, and awoke hope in hearts consumed by hate. Napoleon, struck by the excitement manifested from Seville to Kœnings-berg, summoned his ally, Alexander, to a consultation at Erfurt, and was then obliged to lay aside the vagueness of his magnificent promises. He finished by granting the Danubian provinces. This was too much, a thousand times too much, for it was placing the Russians at the very gates of Constantinople. Alexander, who had expected Constantinople, feigned to be content, because he wished to complete the conquest of Finland, and he thought it better to accept the banks of the Danube, whilst awaiting something better. Napoleon and he embraced at parting, promising to become brothers-in-law, and half disenchanted with their mendacious alliance. Tranquillized by the interview at Erfurt, Napoleon led his best armies into Spain, those before which the continent had yielded. This was the moment awaited by Austria and all the discontented in Germany.

Then occurred a new European rising, that of 1809. Napoleon, after having driven before him, but not conquered, the Spaniards, who constantly fled, was about to overwhelm the English army under Moore, which could not fly as fast as the Spaniards, when the crossing of the Inn by the Austrians suddenly recalled him to the north. He left Valladolid at full speed, promising that in three months Austria should cease to exist, fled like lightning to Paris, from Paris to Ratisbon, and then with an army composed of one-third of the old soldiers that had remained on the Danube, and two-thirds of recruits raised in haste, he wrought miracles at Ratisbon, and again entered Vienna as a conqueror, and thus restrained all the insurrections that were ready to break forth in Germany.

However, from the obstinacy with which the victory was disputed first at Essling, and afterwards at Wagram, together with the excitement of all Germany and Europe, Napoleon felt some gleams of the truth penetrate his mind. He saw that the world needed repose, and that if he did not accord it, he would expose himself to a universal revolt of the nations. He then formed some resolutions, which were the result of this short-lived wisdom. He determined to withdraw his troops from Germany (at least from those territories that did not belong to him) in order to diminish the general anger; he determined to finish by arranging the affairs of Spain, and thus deprive England of a pretext for continuing the war; he endeavoured to make this latter power submit, by the absolute prohibition of commerce, and in this view he systematized the continental blockade. Lastly, he resolved to marry again, as if having heirs could ensure the inheritance of the crown, or as though the Imperial happiness constituted the happiness of the people.

However, if these resolutions formed under a wise inspiration, had been seriously carried out, it is possible that the gigantic order of things, which Napoleon wished to establish, might have acquired

consistence, and, perhaps, duration, at least in all that was not absolutely opposed to the interests of the people concerned. If he had, in reality, evacuated Germany, and employed in Spain forces proportioned to the difficulty of the undertaking, and persevered, without violence, in the continental blockade, he might, in all probability have obtained a maritime peace, which would have put an end to the principal sufferings of the continental nations, and suppressed a serious cause of disunion with the nations subjected to the continental blockade, and if he had crowned all by a marriage, that had been really an alliance, he might have consolidated an exaggerated state of things, and perpetuated all that was not actually impossible. But his temperament, and acquired habits soon led Napoleon to results diametrically opposite to these fleeting pacific inclinations. Thus, whilst evacuating some parts of Germany, he assembled masses of troops from Bremen to Hamburg, from Hamburg to Dantzig, under pretence of a continental blockade. He did still better; to simplify proceedings, he united to the Empire, Holland, Bremen, Hamburg, Lubeck, and the Duchy of Oldenburg, which belonged to the imperial family of Russia. At the same time he united Rome and Tuscany to the Empire. The Pope resisted, he had him arrested, carried first to Savona, and then to Fontainebleau, where he kept him in respectful bondage. From Saville to Dantzig he caused several seizures of merchandize to be made, which, however, without adding anything to the efficacy of the blockade, added intensely to the irritation the people felt against the system. Whilst he was so rigorous in the observance of the blockade, especially with those who had no interest in it, he committed the strangest infractions himself, in granting the French licenses to trade with England, which gave the appearance of intolerance to the whole system, for it would seem as though France would not submit to a regimen that had been invented for her sole benefit. As to Spain, where it was of so much importance to put an end to the war, Napoleon, deceiving himself as to the real difficulties, was wrong in not sending larger forces there, or in not going there himself, for his presence would, at least, have encouraged existing forces to a decisive result. The war in Spain was continued indefinitely at the expense of the French army, which was exhausted, and to the great glory of the English, who alone seemed to keep the great empire in check. Then, Napoleon's marriage, which might have been a signal of peace, a hope of repose for weary Europe, instead of procuring a solid alliance, caused, on the contrary, the rupture of the union with Russia, on which all the imperial policy had been based since the day of Tilsit. It was a Russian princess that Napoleon was to have married, according to the promises made at Erfurt. But when Alexander allied himself with us, he acted singly for his court and nation, neither as pliant nor as cunning as he, did not perceive, that if he were inconsistent, this inconsistency won him Finland and Bessarabia; but to dispose of his sister's hand, it was

necessary to remove his mother's prejudices, and this occasioned some delay. But Napoleon would brook no delay, and abruptly breaking off the negotiation, though it had been only just commenced, and without taking the trouble of freeing himself from his engagements, married an Austrian princess. Austria hastened to offer this connection, less from a desire to form an alliance with France, than through a wish to break the bonds that united her to Russia, and Napoleon accepted it, because he had been kept waiting for the Russian princess, and because the Austrian princess was of more noble birth, and because it was an alliance such as the Bourbons had formerly contracted. From this moment, the alliance with Russia was broken, an alliance which was indeed false, mendacious, but specious, and consequently useful. Napoleon was alone in the world with his pride and his army, an admirable army, but scattered from Cadiz to Kowno.

His pacific views, after the battle of Wagram, produced but this result, that Holland, the Hanseatic towns, the Duchy of Oldenburg, Tuscany, and Rome were united to the Empire; the Pope was imprisoned; the continental blockade was made intolerable by its rigour and inexplicable infractions; the war in Spain was indefinitely prolonged; the Russian alliance was broken off, and no alliance, but a marriage for vanity, contracted with Austria.

Such was the position of Napoleon in 1811, after twelve years of absolute power, either as First Consul or Emperor. This needed a solution. Weary of seeking it in the Peninsula, since Massena had been stopped before the lines of Torres-Vedras, Napoleon determined to seek it elsewhere. Austria and Prussia were, apparently, profoundly submissive; their hearts were pained, but their gestures were humble; each word they uttered was one of deference, and when some too-deeply oppressed interest was to be defended, their language assumed the form of a prayer. Russia, a little less humble, was the only one that dared dispute with the master of the continent, but, indeed, only in the gentlest terms. It was obvious that she still counted on her geographical position, though it was evident she had been made to feel at Friedland, that even at the distance of the Seine from the Niemen, Napoleon's blows could be severely felt. She complained, but with moderation, that her kinsman, the Duke of Oldenburg, had been deprived of his territories. She demanded that she should be reassured by a secret convention as to the future destiny of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, which was nothing, but might become Poland. Then she resisted the continental blockade. She said that each nation should be allowed to make such commercial laws for itself as would be judged best suited to its interests; she had promised to close the Russian rivers against British commerce, and she had kept her word; that, indeed, some English vessels had entered under the American flag, but they had been very few, and could not be prevented without exciting a revolt amongst the people. All this, we must remember, was said with infinite moderation, and supported with the most solid reasoning.

Russia said nothing of the insult to the Russian princess, but she showed by her manner that she felt it deeply.

These objections made Napoleon indignant. To resist him even noiselessly and unknown to the world, was, in his opinion, to give the signal of revolt. If any one, no matter where, offered opposition to his arbitrary will, he considered that he was defied. In him, calculation was always united to the anger of pride. The Spanish war seeming difficult to terminate, and, above all, likely to be protracted; no effect being yet produced by the continental blockade, and the Boulogne expedition having been long since abandoned, Napoleon determined to bring the present state of affairs to a conclusion on the banks of the Dwina and Dnieper. He pictured to himself that when from Cadiz to Moscow there would be no longer a shadow of resistance, and when Russia would be reduced to the same position as Austria or Prussia, he should have resolved the European question, that overwearied England would yield, and that the French empire extending from Rome to Amsterdam, from Amsterdam to Lubeck, would be firmly established, having as vassals the kingdom of Spain, Naples, Italy and Westphalia! Thus, it was the rage of pride, joined to the expectation of finishing in the north what did not seem likely to terminate in the south, that furnished the true causes of the Russian war.

This fatal undertaking was commenced with formidable resources, and began at Dresden with the unheard-of spectacle which Napoleon and the sovereigns of the continent presented for a whole month, of power on one side, and dependance on the other. The monarchs, humbler and more mortified than ever, presented themselves before their master with humility writ upon their brows but hatred in their hearts. Although Napoleon, far from having lost any of his qualities as a great captain, had, on the contrary, gained all that experience could add to great genius; still the art of war had deteriorated somewhat, from the very vastness of his aims, and the precipitation of his enterprises. In every art, indeed, to do too much, is to do ill. The conceptions were undoubtedly more vast, but the execution less perfect. And especially in the Russian war, the luxury which had been introduced amongst our generals, the precautions that were taken against an unknown and dreaded climate, had loaded the army with baggage that would be inconvenient even for short distances, but overwhelming for great. Besides this, the desire to increase the number of soldiers, and the habit of finishing all by a skilful disposition of masses, had introduced a kind of negligence as to the quality of the troops. The corps of Marshal Davout alone remained a model, and two hundred thousand men such as his would have gained the cause that was lost by the six hundred thousand that were marched beyond the Niemen. But—singular example of the progress of meanness under despotic rule!—a somewhat spiteful feeling was engendered against Marshal Davout, because of the strict and severe discipline in which he kept his troops amid the general laxity. Thus that art which had almost attained

theoretic perfection in Napoleon's conceptions, had become somewhat corrupted in practice. The campaign of 1812 represented an expedition in the style of Xerxes. Scarcely eight days had elapsed after the passage of the Niemen, when two hundred thousand men abandoned their standards, and presented the deplorable and contagious example of a breaking up of the army. Perhaps if Napoleon had paused, serried his ranks, and consolidated his base of operation, he might have been able to inflict a mortal blow on the Russian Colossus. But in presence of observant Europe, filled with silent but profound hatred, and ardently desiring our ruin, one of those prodigies with which Napoleon was wont to astonish her was needed, such as Austerlitz, Jena, or Friedland. Napoleon went in pursuit of this prodigy even to the banks of the Moskowa, and there indeed he found a prodigy, on the 7th of September, 1812, but it was a prodigy of carnage, and nothing definite—the definite he must seek in Moscow itself, where indeed he found something wondrous; he beheld a fearful patriotic sacrifice, the conflagration of Moscow, and then remained a whole month uncertain, and hesitating at the extremity of the civilized world. Never, indeed, did he show more firmness, or more talent in combination, than in the twenty and odd days passed and lost in Moscow. But the exhausted powers of his lieutenants were not equal to the means by which he meant to free himself from the abyss into which he had sprung. It was necessary to return. The army, which contained in its ranks too many foreigners and too many young men, acted upon by the climate and the distance, at the same time that it was labouring beneath its baggage, fell into dissolution in the midst of the frozen immensity of Russia. At the commencement of the retreat Napoleon sunk for some days into a state of stupefaction, which suggested an idea of weakness of mind, but these were only a few days spent in contemplation, in realizing this prodigious change of fortune. At Berezina his natural disposition shone forth again, and never sank more, not even at Waterloo. Those who blame the military genius of Napoleon at this epoch, are guilty of an error of judgment. It is not his military genius that should be blamed, but his frenzied will, that, impatient of every obstacle, wished to extend its influence from men to nature, where it found that resistance that man no longer offered, and it was beneath the unfettered violence of the elements he sank. It was not the soldier that erred and was punished by the effects of his own fault, but the despot, that acted after the fashion of the despots of Asia. In another age, and with less intelligence than he possessed, Napoleon might, perhaps, like Xerxes, have whipped the sea, because it disobeyed him. However, there was one thing that bore some resemblance to such extravagance, for, during several months the French journalists of that time poured forth unheard-of maledictions on the climate of Russia, the sole cause, they said, of our misfortunes. The external form of things changes, but human folly is ever the same.

Napoleon deserting his army, as his detractors say, or as the im-

partial historian will say, quitting his soldiers without compunction, in order to go and prepare another army, crossed Germany secretly, Germany more stunned than he, and needing some reflection to enable her to believe in his change of fortune. He had time to escape and resieze the reins of the Empire at Paris. Though France was confounded, she hastened to supply him with every thing necessary to avenge our arms, feeling at the same time no indulgence for his errors. He employed these last resources with a military genius tried and improved by misfortune. Germany lightened of her bonds held forth her hands to Russia, and Austria was alone wanting to the union against us in Europe. The safety or ruin of France depended on the manner in which this power would be treated. Austria assumed a position that was at once honourable and diplomatic, which we had no right to expect from her, and which was due alone to the minister who had negotiated Maria Louisa's marriage, who skilfully sought to bring about the transition from alliance to war. Austria, frankly and boldly, interposed as arbiter, between the enslaved nations of Europe, who wished that all the oppressed should unite against their common oppressor, and France who called upon her by the ties of blood. She certainly asked very little, she only required that French Germany, qualified by the title of Confederation of the Rhine, should be given up, that the indispensable ports, Lubeck, Hamburg, and Bremen, should be restored to Germany, that Trieste should be given back to herself, and that the false Poland, called the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, should be abandoned. On these terms she would leave Westphalia, Lombardy, and Naples, in the quality of vassal kingdoms, Holland, Piedmont, Tuscany, and the Roman States, as departments of France, but no mention was made of Spain. She thus yielded to us, twice as much as Napoleon's son could keep. Not believing that Austria would seriously dare to constitute herself arbitress between him and Europe, and hoping that since the war had come nearer to the Rhine, he could sustain it with vigour, Napoleon hastened, whilst the negotiations were going on, to gain the two battles of Lutzen and Bautzen, where, without cavalry and with infantry composed of children, he conquered the best troops of Europe, then treating Austria as an inferior, and taking no heed of her advice, or even of her solicitations, convinced that he could restore his grandeur without her or in spite of her, he broke the armistice of Dresden, and recommenced that fatal strife with all Europe, which he opened by the victory of Dresden, one of the most brilliant conquests of his reign; he commenced a struggle which might, perhaps, have ended successfully for him, had he confined himself to defend the line of the Elbe from Kœnigstein to Magdebourg. But in the rash hope of recovering all his ancient glory at a single blow, he wished to extend his left wing as far as Berlin, and his right to the neighbourhood of Breslau, in order to intercept any supplies that might be sent from Prague to

Berlin; but whilst he was himself victorious on the Elbe, he was conquered in the persons of his lieutenants, both on the Breslau and Berlin routes; he was then obliged to concentrate his forces; but too late; he lost the line of the Elbe, which he sought to reconquer at Leipzig, where, in one of the greatest military encounters recorded in history, he fought for three consecutive days without abandoning the field of battle. But, forced to retreat, he was assailed by a fearful accident—the explosion of the bridge of Leipzig—an accident fortuitous in appearance, but, in reality, the inevitable result of the gigantic scale on which Napoleon conducted all his plans. There he lost a portion of his army, and this deplorable accident caused a second retreat from the Saale to the Rhine, which, though shorter than that from Russia, was almost as disastrous. The army which France had furnished to repair the disaster of 1812 was almost annihilated on the Rhine by typhus fever.

Once on the Rhine, Austria persisting in her prudent policy, offered peace to Napoleon on the conditions of the treaty of Luneville—that is, France reduced to her natural limits. He did not refuse; but he expressed his acceptance with an ambiguity which partook both of pride and the fear of weakening his pretensions, by showing too much eagerness to treat: a new fault, which was, indeed, the almost inevitable consequence of his previous errors. But Europe, that had trembled at the very idea of invading France, finding the nearer she approached it, how much Napoleon had alienated the hearts of the people, profitted of the ambiguity of his language, and, withdrawing her offers, marched directly on Paris. Napoleon, who thought himself invincible on this side of the Rhine, and believed he had sufficient time to assemble the necessary troops, found he had only the miserable remains of Leipzig to oppose all Europe—that is to say, sixty or seventy thousand men—some exhausted, and some mere children, against three hundred thousand trained soldiers. Now, again, he was offered peace, but with the France of 1790. From the first time he was right in opposition to his counsellors, and displaying the noble pride of a citizen, instead of the insensate haughtiness of an Asiatic conqueror, fully comprehending that the France of 1790 would suit the Bourbons better than him, he refused the conditions of Châtillon, and with the wreck of his army, struggled to the last hour with indomitable energy.

It may, indeed, be said, that history does not offer two such spectacles as he presented during the February and March of 1814. His lieutenants, assailed on every frontier, retired in disorder, and betook themselves in consternation to Châlons. Thither he betakes himself alone, with no other reinforcement than his presence, encourages them, gives them new life, reanimates his soldiers, and then hurries forward to anticipate the invasion at Brienne and Rothière; fights with four, sometimes with five to one against him; astonishes his adversaries by the force of his attacks, and succeeds in arresting their progress; thus, profitting of the few days'

respite that had been gained at the point of the sword to provide the Marne, Aube, the Seine, and the Yonne with indispensable troops, and to preserve a sufficient force at the centre to be ready to hasten to any threatened point, he waited, like a tiger on the spring, for the chance that, in the profoundness of his genius, he had foreseen, namely, that the enemy would divide their forces between the rivers that flow towards Paris. This foresight having been justified by events, he hastened to encounter Blucher separated from Schwarzenberg, and overpowered him in four days; then returning to Schwarzenberg, he put him to flight, drew him from the gates of Paris to Troyes, and then, for the last time, he was offered peace—that is, the crown—but he refused the offer because it did not include the natural limits of the country. He then attacks Blucher anew, shuts him up between the Marne and the Aisne, and is on the point of annihilating him and restoring his own fallen fortunes, when Soissons flings open its gates! Nowise troubled by this sudden change of fortune, he fought with indomitable tenacity at Craonne and Laon, and is on the point of winning back the victory, when an error of Marmont destroys the possibility. He then retires half conquered, but not discomfited—does not yet despair, though the manœuvre of hurrying from Blucher to Schwarzenberg was no longer possible, because it had become too evident to the enemy—because Blucher had not been overcome—in a word, because they were too near each other! Always inexhaustible in resources, he determined to fall back on the fortresses and rally the garrisons, and take up a position with a hundred thousand men on the enemy's rear. Before executing this daring march, he made an attack on Schwarzenberg's flank at Arcis-sur-Aube, in order to draw the Austrian General towards him; hastens then to Nancy, when the enemy, marching on Paris, succeeded in forcing the gates. Napoleon returns in haste, finds the enemy dispersed on both banks of the Seine, and is preparing to crush them, when his lieutenants wrest the sword from his hand, punishing him too late for the bad use he had made of it; and he, the successful warrior, terminates his career, after displaying all the resources of his character and his genius in a desperate war, in which he added to all the brilliancy, daring, and fertility of resource exhibited on his former campaigns, one quality that he had still to display—and which he then displayed even to a miracle—unchangeable constancy in misfortune!

Such was Napoleon's career from the commencement to the close. We have recapitulated it in a few pages, to present it better as a whole; let us now compress it into a still smaller space, that we may draw from it the profound lessons it contains.

In the midst of France exhausted of her blood, and disgusted by the scenes she had witnessed for the last ten years, General Bonaparte seized the Dictatorship on the eighteenth Brumaire, and, in doing so, whatever may be said, he committed neither fault nor crime. The Dictatorship was not then an invention of servility,

but a social necessity. In order that liberty should be possible, it is necessary that the Government, the opposing parties in the State, and even individuals, should listen to all opinions with unalterable patience. This is scarcely to be expected, even when men, having nothing serious to reproach each other with, betake themselves to calumny. But to imagine that the men of those times could discuss public affairs in a peaceful spirit is an illusion, when we remember that they could justly accuse each other of murder, rapine, and of leagueing with the external enemy. It is not for seizing the Dictatorship that we ought to blame General Bonaparte, but for the use he made of his power from 1800 to 1814.

When, amid the frightful disasters of a long revolution, his genius, as rational as it was great, applied itself to repair the faults of others, he left nothing to be desired. He found the French inflamed one against another; he pacified Vendée; he recalled the emigrants, and even restored them part of their possessions. He found schism established and disturbing the consciences of all, and as he could not remove the evil by his sword, he respectfully addressed himself to the spiritual head of the Catholic universe, whom he himself had replaced upon his throne, induced him by the influence of his reasoning to recognize the legitimate results of the French Revolution, obtained, from him especially, the approbation of the sale of ecclesiastical property, the deposition of the ancient, and the institution of a new and orthodox clergy, and the pardon of those priests who had taken the oath, or had broken their vows. After a negotiation that continued nearly a year, he drew up that masterpiece of skill and patience, the Concordat—regulating all the relations between Church and State, and which, of all our institutes, is the only one that still endures. The Revolution had commenced to frame civil laws under the influence of the wildest passions; Napoleon took up the work and completed it, under the inspiration of good sense and of the experience of ages. He re-established the necessary taxes, which had been abolished by the demagogue flatterers of the multitude; he established an infallible system of finance, and instituted an active, efficient, and honest administration. Externally proud, resolute, but reserved, he knew how to unite force with persuasion. In Switzerland he effected a pacification, like to that of Vendée, by means of the Act of Mediation, which, though under another name, continues the definite constitution of that country. He reconstituted Germany, which had been thrown into confusion by the war, by compensating the dispossessed princes with the property of the church, and by establishing a just equilibrium between the confederate princes. Thus holding, with firm and equitable hand, the balance of German interests, which he allowed to incline slightly towards Prussia, without at the same time offending Austria, he prepared the Prussian alliance, the only one that was then possible, and at the same time equal to our wants. Having thus effected all the good that was practicable or possible, both at home and abroad, admired by the world, adored

by France, nothing more remained for him than to rest in this unsullied glory, and allow the wearied world to rest with him.

Vain dream! this man, who had so truly estimated, and so wisely suppressed the passions of others, could not restrain himself when his own were wounded. The emigrants, who had taken refuge in London, insulted him; England did not prevent them, because, by the constitution of her laws, she could not, and moreover, she listened to them because it flattered her jealousy. What wonder that it was so; what cause could it be of surprise, much less of anger! But this hero, this sage, whom the world admired, could no longer control himself. He demanded vengeance, and because he did not receive such as his anger demanded, he insulted the ambassador of Great Britain. When he needed but to wait a few days, and the English would have evacuated Malta, he broke the peace of Amiens, and thus left Malta for ever to Britain. The emigrants, who had insulted him, conspired against his life, having some princes as accomplices or confidants. Not being able to punish either the one or the other, he seized, on neutral ground, a prince who possibly knew nothing of these plots, but who certainly took no part in them, and had him ruthlessly shot. Europe exclaimed against this violation of neutral territory: he insulted Europe. Alas! in his excited mind passion had conquered reason, and every change of this powerful intellect, becoming a cause of revolution in the entire world, the firm and sustained policy of the Consulate gave place to the wild and reckless government of the Empire. This was the first great fault of the First Consul, and the most important, for it was the source of every other.

At war with Great Britain, the First Consul wished to fight her hand to hand, and cross the straits of Dover. But to pass the sea in safety, it would be necessary to tranquillize the continent, and he took Genoa. Then the continent rose, and the maritime war was exchanged for a continental one, which was not to be regretted, for it gave him an opportunity of fighting England in the persons of her allies, and decide the question by land instead of by sea. Having crushed Austria at Ulm and at Austerlitz, he sent Russia home conquered and ashamed; and Prussia, that came to dictate to him, he covered with ridicule. This was the time to resume the exercise of his reason, and consolidate and extend the peace of Amiens and Luneville. Had he made Austria suffer only inevitable losses, compensating her even when necessary; had he by his consideration for her feelings or by gifts that caused her no shame, consoled Prussia for the embarrassment of her position; had he asked nothing of Russia, but, that she should stand aloof in a quarrel in which she had no concern, Napoleon would have isolated England, and compelled her to treat on whatever conditions he pleased, and he would thus have resumed the consular policy, at the same time that his imperial title would have been universally recognized, and he would have obtained some useless though brilliant acquisitions. Unfortunately, instead of considering his triumphs

at Ulm and Austerlitz, as what they were, and what they ought to be, a means of conquering England by land, he only looked upon them as an opportunity of obtaining universal empire. This was his second great fault, and the one that was destined to involve him permanently in the practices of a madly-acquisitive policy. He then proceeded in quick succession to take Naples for his brother Joseph, Lombardy for his adopted son, Eugene, Holland for his brother Louis, all three destined to become vassal sovereigns of the great empire of the west; he overturned that Germany that he had reconstituted, and which was one of his greatest works, and created a French Germany under the title of the Confederation of the Rhine, a Germany from which Austria and Prussia were excluded; he placed the crown of the Cæsars on his head, and humbled Prussia by the gift of Hanover! and, still, he was so powerful at this time, that these excesses did not render peace impossible, so ardently was it desired, even at any price. Russia had sent M. d'Oubril as ambassador to Napoleon, and England sent Lord Lauderdale, and their only demand, after all his extravagant enterprises, was that Sicily should be given to the Bourbons, and Sardinia to the House of Savoy. Napoleon wishing to treat separately with each, that he might the better bend them to his purpose, lost the opportunity of making peace with both, a peace that would have been the consecration of all his daring acts; he refused a simple explanation to Prussia on the subject of the restitution of Hanover to George III., and consequently found himself in the centre of a universal war. But he had the best soldiers in the world, and was himself the greatest commander of modern times, perhaps of any time. In a few months he had annihilated the Prussian army at Jena, and completed the destruction of the Russian troops at Friedland. From this day forth, envy could no longer wound his pride, it could no longer pique him with the army of the great Frederick, an army that he had overpowered in a single day, nor could distance any longer render Russia invincible. Now was the time, even more opportune than after Austerlitz, when he ought to have resumed a wise policy and made use of his power on the continent to deprive England for ever of her allies. He might, for example, have gratified Austria by the cession of the Danubian provinces, and have made this gift Russia's sole punishment. He might have raised up prostrate Prussia, by restoring to her all that she had lost by her imprudence, and have overwhelmed her with joy, surprise, and gratitude; and, certainly, when he had consoled Austria, attached Prussia for ever to France, and twice punished Russia for imprudent interference, isolated England would have surrendered to our arms; and the gigantic empire, already sketched by Napoleon, might have been securely founded. But the same cause that had made him abandon the moderate policy of 1803, and prevented his resuming it after Austerlitz, still subsisted; and, intoxicated with pride, seeking to systematize his faults, that he might

excuse them to himself, excluding from his consideration, as if they did not exist, greater number of the states of Europe, he would only recognize two great empires, that of the East and that of the West, each resting on the other, and, gaining strength from this mutual support, and thus enabling him to revel in the exercise of unlicensed power over the enslaved world. This was the third of Napoleon's great faults; for this Russian alliance, which henceforth formed the sole basis of his policy, must either be false, or a crime against Europe—false, if he wished to exercise unlimited power himself, and not allow the same to Russia, a crime against Europe, if he opened the route to Constantinople to his ally. Alas! hurried along by the torrent of conquest, his progress was so rapid, and he gave himself so little time to reflect, that he never decided how far he would allow Russia to proceed towards Constantinople, or what should be done with the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, that ought to become Poland or nothing! What he hoped was, that with the assistance of Russia he could decide the Spanish question; that became his ruling thought. Spain, possessed by the Bourbons, was all that was wanting to his vast empire, and he was anxious to make it one of the vassal kingdoms of the West. Spain, submissive and ashamed of her condition, asking him for a system of policy, a government, and a wife, might perhaps be induced to ask him for a king, if he had waited. But he had become as incapable of patience as of moderation, and sought to make the Bourbons fly from Aranjuez, that he might stop them at Cadiz. As the Spanish people had opposed this flight, he induced them to come to Bayonne, where, exciting the father and son against each other, he took advantage of their dissension to declare the one incompetent and the other unworthy, and finished this sombre comedy by an usurpation that disgusted Europe, excited Spain to revolt, and turned it into a new Vendée, in the midst of which a high-spirited people like the Spaniards, and an obstinate nation like the English, waged an endless war against us. This was the fourth fault of the imperial reign, and certainly the greatest, since the abandonment of the moderate policy of 1803, for it caused the ruin of the French army, the sole support of the Bonaparte dynasty, since Napoleon had made his reign a reign of physical force.

Baylen—fatal name—was the first punishment of the crime committed at Bayonne. When a revolted peasantry rose up against our soldiers and forced them to capitulate, dejected Europe resumed her courage, and in 1809 Austria, impatient of the yoke, gave the signal for a general revolt. Napoleon's best solders being in Spain, he advanced with conscripts to meet Austria, and, accomplishing wonders at Ratisbon, he exposed himself to great danger at Essling, by his too great precipitation, performed new wonders at Wagram, and thus put an end to the first European revolt, for which Austria had given the signal too early.

However, the ground had become unsteady beneath his tread, and some gleams of reason penetrated to his excited brain. He

felt the necessity of appeasing Europe, and formed the determination to evacuate Germany, to carry on the continental blockade with perseverance, to finish the Spanish war, and by this twofold means to reduce England to peace. He would then rest, and allow the world to rest, and marry that he might have an heir to this universal monarchy.

With these pacific views, Napoleon, in the course of fifteen months, united Holland, Bremen, Hamburg, Lubeck, Oldenburg, Tuscany, and Rome, to the Empire, had the Pope imprisoned, forbid the merchants of the continent to hold any communication with the English, at the same time that he granted licenses to Frenchmen to go to London and return; he married an Austrian archduchess, without deigning to break off formally his negotiation for the hand of Alexander's sister because he had been kept waiting; and thus terminated that mendacious Russian alliance, which had gained Finland and Bessarabia for Russia, and furnished us the opportunity of ruining our fortunes in Spain.

Nevertheless, the continent, although full of hatred, submitted under the influence of the battle of Wagram. Russia alone ventured to offer some objections touching the territory of Oldenburg, which had been taken from a prince of his family, and to the manner in which the continental blockade was put in operation, and to the successive augmentation of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, until it had almost become Poland. Then Napoleon, finding the Spanish war and the continental blockade too tedious, wished to enter Russia, thinking that when he should have punished, at that distance, a power that had dared to raise its voice in objection, he would have terminated his fearful struggle with the civilised world. This was the fifth great fault, and it would be difficult to say in what degree it surpassed or fell behind its predecessors in folly; for one would be embarrassed to decide which was the greatest error, to have broken the peace of Amiens unseasonably, or to have sought universal monarchy after Austerlitz; to have, after Friedland, founded his policy on the inexplicable Russian alliance, to have gone to war with Spain, or to have marched to Moscow. However that may be, followed by six hundred thousand soldiers, he now commenced a struggle both against man and nature. But nature can defend herself better than man, and she did it now by alternately opposing to the conqueror of the Alps, distance, heat, cold, and famine. However, she might herself have been conquered by time! But Napoleon had not time. The world secretly leagued against him, left him none, and he would have needed to complete his conquest in one campaign. He was overwhelmed by the most tragic catastrophe that time shall ever bring forth.

Desolated France generously furnished him with the means of repairing his own glory and ours, and he was about to do so, after Lutzen and Bautzen, even in a higher degree than was desirable, when the insensate hope of recovering all his

losses at a single blow, made him commit his sixth and last great fault, for it consummated his ruin; this was refusing the conditions of Prague, and extending his line of operations from Dresden to Berlin, whilst, if he had concentrated his forces on the Elbe he might have rendered his position impregnable. Forced to abandon Germany, he received a last offer, that of the Rhine frontier, to which he had the folly to return an ambiguous reply, through fear of shewing too great a desire to negotiate, and whilst he lost a month in explanations, Europe profitting of this month, to inquire into the state of France, withdrew her offer and crossed the Rhine. Napoleon, then employing the same talents, the same force of character, to resist those humiliating conditions, that he had before employed to his own ruin, finished, as he had commenced his reign, like a great man,—a reign that was vitiated in mid-career by an ambition, after the fashion of Asiatic conquerors,—a wonderful reign, of which it may be said, that nothing could be more perfect than its commencement, nothing more extravagant than its mid-course, and nothing more heroic than its termination.

Thus this great and doom-bringing man, after having attained perfection during the Consulate, abandons, at the first offence offered to his pride, the firm and moderate policy of 1803, is about to attack England, but is turned from it by the continent that he has himself provoked, but which he cruelly punishes; it now only needed an effort of generosity and wisdom, and he might have returned to the practice of a sound policy, first at Austerlitz, again at Friedland; but, all-powerful in his influence over others, and infinitely weak in his empire over himself, he dashes into the vague region of chimeras, and frames, in his airy dreams, a vast empire of the west, that is to embrace civilized Europe, from Poland to Spain; to effect the realisation of this dream he flatters the Russian visionary views, but receives, at Essling and Wagram, a first notice of the feeling of exasperated Europe; he thinks to profit of it, and might, perhaps, with moderation and patience have consolidated his chimerical empire, but, as incapable of exercising patience as moderation, he wishes to hasten events, marches into Russia, and only hastens his ruin; still he might, after Lutzen and Bautzen have conserved his power, in a higher degree than was even desirable, but he refused the offer of peace at Prague, a chance which fortune never again presented him, and he fell to rise no more. Such, in a few words, is the history of Napoleon's reign.

If, in order to understand aright this extraordinary spectacle, we draw back a step, as in presence of an object too vast to be judged at a near view, if we recur to the times of the French Revolution, then everything is explained, and we see that this reign is one of the phases of this immense revolution, a phase tragic and wondrous as the others, and we recognise it by this essential characteristic of the imperial reign—excess. From 1789 to 1800, we behold the first outburst of the French Revolution; from 1800 to 1814

we see its reaction on itself, a reaction of which the Empire is the condensed expression, and in both the wild whirl of passion is the essential characteristic. The French Revolution dashes into the arena of social reform, with a heart full of generous sentiments, with a mind overflowing with great and fruitful ideas, she encounters obstacles, is astonished, becomes angry—as if the chariot of humanity in rolling over the earth is never to feel the friction—she flies into a rage, becomes intoxicated and furious with passion, pours human blood in torrents on the scaffold, disgusts the world, is herself disgusted at her own excesses, and the offspring of this feeling is a man mighty as the Revolution, imbued with the same desire of effecting good, wishing it ardently, wishing to effect it instantly, by any means, and the consequence is that the projected good disappears from view, convicting him of a thousand self-contradictions, and inflicting on him many severe lessons. Ah, when it is needed to admonish the French Revolution, how admirably Napoleon does so! He condemns regicide, civil war, schism, the captivity of the Pope, a universal republic, the fury of war; he recalls the emigrants, reinstates the Pope at Rome, concludes the Concordat, and grants Europe the peace of Lunéville and Amiens. But the world presents a succession of obstacles, in whatever direction we march, either forwards or backwards. At the first error committed by his adversaries, like the true son of his mother—the Revolution—intemperate as she, refusing to brook either resistance or delay, the prudent Consul flies into a rage, commits regicide at Vincennes, revives schism, detains the Pope prisoner at Fontainebleau, relapses into war, now general and prolonged, substitutes for the universal republic a universal monarchy, and—phenomenon of unheard-of passion—like the Revolution, whose continuator, representative or son he may be called, left behind him immense calamities, high principles, and dazzling glory. The calamities and glory belong to France, the principles to the world at large.

If, after the astonishment, admiration, and terror, we experience in contemplating this spectacle, we wish to draw from it a profound, a never-to-be-forgotten lesson, we must be convinced in the secrecy of our own hearts, whether we contemplate the operation of revolutions, even the most glorious and the most praiseworthy, or whether we weigh the conduct of the most highly-gifted amongst men, we must be convinced that self-restraint is man's first duty. "Commonplace moral," we hear re-echoed on every side. Yes, commonplace, we admit, but ever new, if we only consider how succeeding generations profit of it. It is a lesson that must be continually repeated, and is in itself the concentration of all public and private wisdom. In fact, nations and individuals, especially great nations and high-minded individuals, are never wanting in heroic impulses. What they do fail in is forbearance, cool reason, and self-control. For men, private or public, ordinary or extraordinary, for nations, above all, during revolution, which are often only

an unpremeditated impulse to [redacted]nt is the great secret by which we can retain our [redacted]ome useful or happy; in a word, it is the great secret of s[redacted]. If we cannot restrain, that is, if we cannot govern ourselves, we injure the cause, whose triumph, in the excess of our affection, we had endeavoured to secure, by violence or precipitation! Let us always keep three great examples before our eyes—the Convention destroyed liberty, Napoleon destroyed the greatness of France and the House of Bourbon destroyed the cause of legitimacy—that is to say, they destroyed the cause, whose success they had each a special mission to serve! But we go too far, when we say destroyed, for great principles can never be destroyed in this world. They are only compromised.

After having pronounced judgment on Napoleon's reign, it becomes our duty to pronounce judgment on the man himself, as soldier, politician, administrator, legislator, thinker, and writer, and assign him a place in that glorious family that reckons amongst its members Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and Frederick the Great. But, to pronounce a correct judgment, it is necessary that the great man's career should be finished. The end of his career was not attained at the isle of Elba. Providence reserved two further trials for Napoleon. He was destined to stand again, face to face, with the powers of Europe, busy dividing our spoils amongst themselves, and disturbed in the division by his return from the isle of Elba. He was in a special manner destined to stand face to face with reviving liberty. This is the spectacle presented by 1815, during the period called "the hundred days," a mournful and tragic spectacle, whose details we purpose to retrace. After which, we shall judge the man as a whole. And after having judged the man impartially, our task will be finished, and we shall leave to posterity the task of pronouncing judgment on our judgment, if, indeed, posterity will deign to take the trouble of correcting or confirming our opinion.

END OF BOOK LIII.

AND

VOLUME XVII.

NOTE ON THE MARRIAGE OF PRINCE JEROME BONAPARTE.

(See Vol viii.)

M. Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, French citizen, residing in the United States at Baltimore, required the editors on the 7th May, 1859, to insert in the present volume, the following note, which they believe they ought to insert, not being judges of a question of state policy, which the legal authorities can alone decide.

"On the 24th December, 1803, M. Jerome Bonaparte, at that time an officer in the navy of the French republic, married Miss Elizabeth Paterson, daughter of a respectable citizen of the United States: this marriage was celebrated at Baltimore by the Bishop of Baltimore, according to the rites of the holy Catholic Church, and the act of celebration was inserted the same day in the register of marriages at the cathedral of the city of Baltimore.

"M. Jerome Bonaparte, then aged nineteen, had attained the age required by the laws of France, to render a marriage valid (Art. 144 of the Civil Code).

"This marriage was not contracted under any of the conditions which would render it null by the 184th article of the same code.

"The father of M. Jerome Bonaparte was dead: his mother, Madame Lætitia Bonaparte, was still living, but her consent was not necessary to the validity of the marriage, neither by the American nor Canon law. According to the French law, the invalidity resulting from the absence of the paternal and maternal consent was not absolute; this invalidity not having been appealed against during the first year that the marriage was known to his mother. (Art. 183 of the Civil Code.)

"Madame Lætitia never judicially demanded that her son's marriage should be annulled: on the contrary, in her later correspondence, Madame Lætitia called M. Jerome-Napoleon Bonaparte, the issue of this marriage, *her dear son*, and especially in a letter of the 10th November, 1829, she congratulated him on his marriage, and concluded with the words, '*your very affectionate mother.*'

"The princes Joseph and Louis Bonaparte have always in like manner spoken of and written to him as their nephew.

"In 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte shared the dignity of Consul of the Republic, with two other French citizens: he was not invested with any of the rights attributed to the heads of royal houses, with regard to the members of their families, who cannot marry without their consent. The First Consul had no legal authority to recognize *or* [illegible] *to recognize* the validity of his brother's marriage.

"On the 24th May, 1805, the Emperor Napoleon wrote to Pope Pius VII. in these terms: '*I wish for a bull from your Holiness to annul this marriage. Your Holiness will please to do this without publicity; I shall not have the marriage annulled in the civil courts until I hear your Holiness is willing to declare it void.*'

"The Holy Father replied to the Emperor in a very detailed brief, dated 27th June, 1805, in which we find the following: 'In order to preserve an inviolable secrecy, we have done ourself the honour of satisfying your Majesty's solicitations with the greatest exactness: for this reason we have reserved to ourself exclusively the task of examining the proofs, touching the marriage in question.

"'*We regret that we cannot find any cause that would authorize us to declare the marriage invalid.*

"'Did we usurp an authority that did not belong to us, we should render ourself guilty before the tribunal of God and in face of the entire Church *of a most abominable abuse* of our sacred ministry. Your Majesty, in your justice, would not wish that we should pronounce a judgment contrary to *the testimony of our conscience* and the invariable principles of the Church.'

"It does not in any way touch the validity of the marriage contracted in 1803 by the citizen Jerome Bonaparte, that this marriage became at a later period, opposed in the highest degree to the political designs of the Emperor of the French."

Printed by M. S. Myers, 18, Exeter Street, Strand, W.C.

00030556

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 10 February, 2016